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Major and Blair challenged to meet in face-to-face debate

By PHILIP WEBSTER, POLITICAL EDITOR

A FRESH challenge to John Major and Tony Blair to take part in a televised general election debate is issued today by *The Times*.

After the breakdown of negotiations between the parties at the end of last month on what would be the first such encounter in British

politics, the initiative appeared to be over, for this election at least.

But yesterday Peter Stothard, the Editor of *The Times*, wrote to the Tory and Labour camps asking their leaders to participate in a debate, hosted by the newspaper and thrown open to the television companies, in London on Sunday April 20.

He said last night: "This challenge is intended to break the stalemate over a leaders' debate and to offer the two candidates for Prime Minister a chance to discuss their different visions for the future of Britain in a neutral setting."

A leading article in the newspaper today states that the time is now ripe for a debate. It says: "Even without the prospect of a debate to divert the campaigners' minds, the central issue has become one of trust and personal character. Voters have been asked to believe that the very soul of the Tory party has somehow been rehoused in Tony Blair. They have been asked to believe that Mr Major has a resolution under fire that has been underestimated in the past and will serve Britain powerfully in the future. Voters deserve to see these qualities tested directly before their eyes."

The lengthy talks with the broadcasters ended on March 27 amid recriminations with the Tories claiming that Labour had "run away" and Labour saying that the Tories had "frustrated discussions."

The debate as proposed by *The Times* would not include Paddy Ashdown because, the leading article states, it is intended to be between the potential prime ministers and because "three debaters makes bad debate."

But it also accepts that the broadcasters would have to make special arrangements to give Mr Ashdown the compensating air time that would be his due.

Today's proposal by *The Times* is the last hope for a debate. All three parties, including the Conservatives who appeared to be the keenest, had virtually written off the idea.

However the apparent narrowing in the polls in recent days may make the Labour leadership more amenable to the challenge.

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Tories flout wait-and-see line on EMU

By ANDREW PIERCE, DOMINIC KENNEDY, IAN MURRAY AND ARTHUR LEATHLEY

DOZENS of Tory candidates, including at least one minister, have flouted the Government's wait-and-see policy on a single currency in their constituency election manifestos.

Many are taking advantage of a millionaire businessman's offer of financial support to any candidate who opposes a single currency. It is thought that around 150 Tories will receive donations from Paul Sykes, 53, who said last night: "I think the final number of candidates will be closer to 200. It is going to cost me around £500,000. But it's worth it. The argument is moving our way."

The minister concerned is Angela Browning at the Department of Agriculture, who has apparently breached the carefully crafted government line in defiance of direct pleas from John Major.

Mrs Browning, who is defending Tiverton and Honiton, and was tipped for promotion, made her views clear in an election newsletter, in which she writes that there were constitutional as well as economic issues to take into account in consideration of a

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single currency. One of the conditions already stated in the Maastricht treaty was that all countries which joined should hand over their gold and foreign currency reserves to the Central Bank in Frankfurt, she writes.

The consequence would be "the end of sovereignty of the nation state and if that is what is offered I will not support it."

Many of her Tory colleagues are even blunter in their election addresses despite appeals from a succession of senior ministers led by Mr Major, Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, and Brian Mawhinney, the party chairman, to resist the temptation to defy the policy.

Sir Rhodes Boyson, an officer of the 1922 backbench committee of MPs, who is defending Brent North,

writes: "I believe that a single currency would be disastrous for Britain. Let us stay in Europe as a trading nation but we must retain our own currency, our own Armed Forces and our own legal system."

Sir Archie Hamilton, the former minister and a leading candidate to be the next chairman of the 1922 committee, writes: "If re-elected I shall vote against monetary union and campaign against it in the referendum the Tories have promised. We do not want to lose our pound."

David Shaw, who is defending Dover, said: "I shall listen very carefully to all the arguments about the single currency and then I shall vote against it."

Walter Sweeney, who is defending a majority of 19 in the Vale of Glamorgan, said: "NO to the Social Chapter. NO to a single currency."

Three candidates have set up web sites on the Internet declaring their opposition to a single currency. They are Stephen Day, Cheshire, David Heathcoat-Amory, the former Paymaster General who resigned from the Government to campaign against the single currency, and Robert Syms in Poole.

The extent of the manifesto "rebellion" became apparent as the Prime Minister was making his first major campaign speech on Europe.

Speaking in Staffordshire on the eve of Labour's business manifesto launch, he said that Tony Blair's promise to sign up to the Social Chapter would damage jobs and lead to a resurgence in trade union power.

Mr Major said: "The unions have long seen Europe as the back door to power in Britain. While Margaret Thatcher and I have been in charge, that back door has stayed firmly bolted."

A Labour government would slip that bolt ever so quietly open. And once the door was open, it could never be closed. The Social Chapter is the unions' fast track back to power in Britain. That's one reason why I won't ever sign it."



Nigel Kennedy, the 36-year-old superbrat of the musical world, made his comeback into classical music last night at the Royal Festival Hall after a five-year absence. He played pieces by Bach, Bartok... and Jimi Hendrix

IRA sniper attacks woman constable

By NICHOLAS WATT
CHIEF IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

A WOMAN police officer was fighting for her life last night after an IRA sniper shot her in the chest in the centre of Londonderry. The shooting confounded speculation in Belfast that the IRA would announce a tactical suspension of its terrorist campaign at 4.00pm yesterday to boost Sinn Féin's election vote.

The gunman fired a single shot at the policewoman from the back of a van 12 minutes before the ceasefire was expected. The RUC Reserve Force constable, in her forties and married with three children, was on guard duty outside the courthouse. Her condition was serious but stable last night.

After the shooting the van sped away and was later abandoned at Butcher Gate on the city walls when the terrorists escaped into the Bogside area, a stronghold of Sinn Féin. The van had mainland numberplates. The IRA later claimed responsibility.

Sir Patrick Mayhew, the Northern Ireland Secretary, last night condemned the shooting as a "sickening attack". He said: "My thoughts are with this brave young woman and her family... She was guarding the Courts of Justice. Justice means nothing to the IRA... Their victims receive no trial and are granted no appeal."

Small firms' bosses support Labour

By JILL SHERMAN AND ARTHUR LEATHLEY

EIGHTY-FOUR leaders of small companies today endorse Tony Blair's New Labour party, claiming that the Tories had failed to support them in the past five years.

In a letter in *The Times* today - the same day Labour launches its business manifesto - the industrialists argue that there have been 11 tax increases and red tape had expanded rather than contracted under the Tories.

"A small business has gone bust every three minutes of every working day since 1992. Mr Major's belated announcement earlier this week on business rates will do too little to make up for what we have lost," says the letter.

"We believe that small business can look forward with confidence to a profitable future with a Labour government."

But Labour's evident delight was marred when a millionaire businessman hailed by Mr Blair last year as backing his party's values turned his fire on the Labour leader, accusing him of "trying to rope us all in".

Sir Anthony Bamford denied Labour leadership suggestions that he was not hostile to the party's policies and backed its objectives. At last year's annual party conference Mr Blair used the

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EU recalls envoys to Iran as Bonn expels diplomats

By MICHAEL BINYON, DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

THE European Union last night suspended its "critical dialogue" with Iran and announced the immediate recall of all EU ambassadors in Tehran. The moves came just hours after a Berlin court verdict that directly implicated senior Iranian Government officials in the murder of Kurdish exiles in a restaurant in 1992.

Germany also announced the immediate recall of its envoy to Tehran, the expulsion of four Iranian diplomats from Bonn and a unilateral ending of German participation in any "critical dialogue" with Iran. The German Foreign Ministry warned Ger-

mans not to travel to Iran. Germany accused Iran of a "flagrant violation of international law" after Judge Frithjof Kubsch said in his ruling that the assassination of the four Kurds was ordered by an Iranian secret special operations committee whose members included President Rafsanjani, and Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the supreme spiritual leader, as well as the Intelligence Minister and the head of foreign policy. The judge did not name them.

Britain gave swift support to the EU statement and to Germany's measures. The Foreign Office said that it would work with Britain's EU

partners to agree a firm response on April 29.

Among the retaliatory measures being considered are the expulsion and permanent exclusion of all remaining Iranian intelligence officials from any EU country.

Iran responded last night, withdrawing its Ambassador to Bonn for "consultations", expelling four German diplomats from Tehran and dismissing the Berlin verdict as political. "This accusation is not true," Ali Akbar Nateq-Nouri, the parliamentary Speaker, said.

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Sunny spring brings threat of hose bans

By NICK NUTTALL
ENVIRONMENT CORRESPONDENT

AS BRITAIN basked in sunshine that outdid Athens, Algiers and Cairo, the prospect of the year's first hose bans emerged in southern England yesterday.

After the driest two years for more than two centuries, and with temperatures in the 70s, at least one water company, Essex and Suffolk, has consulted the Government about introducing bans.

Mid Kent Water has announced that a spotter plane will be patrolling to detect illegally filled swimming pools. Customers with pools are now required to buy licences.

The plane will also report to one of six mobile teams on the ground to check if anyone seen using a sprinkler has a meter or a licence. The company serves 500,000 homes in the Ashford, Maidstone and Canterbury areas.

Chris Thomas, who is to fly the weekend's first spotter mission, said: "We are determined to crack down on anyone who is bucking the system."

Forecasters said yesterday that temperatures would fall today but rise again on Sunday. A spokesman for the London Marathon said 650,000 bottles of water would be available along the route during the race on Sunday. There would also be three shower points.

Although no bans have been introduced so far this year, gardeners in Sussex have had restrictions on sprinklers since last summer.

A spokesman for Essex and Suffolk Water said the company had no restrictions at the moment but this might have to change, adding: "We have had talks with the Department of the Environment and will make a decision at the beginning of May, but restrictions look likely."

The hot dry weather has been good news for sellers of ice-cream and sunglasses, with traders on the South Coast reporting record sales for the time of year.



"Remember there was no mention of sunshine in the Labour manifesto"

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Labour blocks private school's bid to join state system

By DAVID CHARTER
EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

A ROMAN CATHOLIC independent girls' school hoping to join the state system yesterday failed to win approval from Labour to become grant-maintained.

David Blunkett, the Shadow Education Secretary, said a decision could not be made about Mount St Mary's Convent School in Exeter until after the election. The Roman Catholic diocese of Plymouth app-

lied for public funding in December 1995 after a decision to close the school this summer by the Sisters of the Presentation of Mary, the order that runs it.

The diocese won the support of the Funding Agency for Schools, the quango which oversees grant-maintained schools, in July last year. But the Government failed to approve the application before the election was called.

Once an election is called, all business deemed to be "contentious"

is put on hold. Michael Richard, Permanent Secretary at the Department for Education and Employment, ruled that the school fell into that category.

However, Lord Henley, a junior Education Minister, wrote to Mr Blunkett on Wednesday saying that the Government was "minded to approve" the application and asking him to back the plan in order to end the anxiety of parents of the 240 pupils.

A spokesman for Mr Blunkett

yesterday responded: "The Tories have had seven months to expedite this matter. They are lying to local people by trying to pretend that it isn't their fault that this matter was not dealt with much sooner. If we are elected on May 1 and if David Blunkett is Education Secretary, he will look at the proposals in a fair and reasonable manner."

The diocese said the school would fulfil a demand for a non-selective Roman Catholic state education in Exeter. A spokesman said: "At-

though the proposals are supported by the Funding Agency for Schools and, apparently, recommended for approval from the Department for Education, it remains possible in the light of recent events that the present or next Secretary of State could reject them. If this happens, we will do everything possible to help parents to find a suitable school for the girls."

Governors were yesterday criticised for overturning the expulsion of a boy who held a woodwork knife

to a younger pupil's throat. The 15-year-old boy was allowed back to Brockhill Park School in Hythe, Kent, after his parents appealed. The mother of the 12-year-old he threatened said she had not been told of the decision. Tony Gyng, the head teacher, said his staff had reluctantly accepted the decision. "I think the expulsion was right, but I have to respect the decision of the governors."

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Dry spell turns tending lawn from a pleasure into an exercise in emergency planning

Gardeners lose unequal battle against drought

By NICK NUTTALL, ENVIRONMENT CORRESPONDENT

FOR Jenny Woodall it was the lawn which was the first patch of the traditional English garden to be sacrificed in the unequal struggle against the drought.

Now the pansies along with other herbaceous plants are facing replacement by South African and Mediterranean plants able to cope with the bone-dry conditions in her garden near Midhurst, West Sussex.

For Mrs Woodall, three years of drought have turned gardening into an exercise in emergency planning.

Like thousands of other gardeners across Sussex, Mrs Woodall has been under a long-term sprinkler ban of nearly 12 months and what the regional water company describes as an "unattended hosepipe ban".

She said yesterday: "Trudging across a three-acre garden with a watering can is not much fun. I do not water the grass any more. I decided it was a pointless exercise. I have been losing trees and shrubs. New plantings are starting to look pretty sad."

Southern Water said it hoped to get through the spring and summer without more draconian restrictions.

"But I am not convinced that we won't be on standpipes here given the last couple of months. It is getting to be a

serious problem," said Mrs Woodall, whose garden at Nyewood House is part of the National Garden Scheme in which gardens are opened to the public for part of the year.

In an effort to preserve the character of the garden and conserve moisture, she has been putting mulch on the soil over the past three years — about three or four lorryloads annually.

Mrs Woodall said she was switching to Mediterranean plants like *Artemisia*, which produces "insignificant" flowers, but good foliage. Drought resistant South African flowers are also being considered.

"I am thinking about not doing any tubs at all this year," she said.

The damage to the traditional English garden by the drought comes as wildlife experts warned of growing damage to scores of chalk streams fed by springs.

The damage is highlighted in Wiltshire where the Kennet downstream from Marlborough, is coated in a scum of algal-like growths called diatoms, which thrive on phosphates, man-made pollutants that become concentrated at times of low flows.

Gary Mantle of the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust said that instead of being a crystal clear river full of water, crowfoot and other freshwater plants,

the Kennet is choking and covered in scum.

"It really is heartbreaking all the fish and birds like kingfishers have disappeared. It is due to a combination of the drought and over-abstraction by the water companies," Mr Mantle said.

He said the lack of water meant so called "winter bournes", tributaries which spring into life at the end of the winter, had dried up. In the case of the Kennet these normally run near places like Avebury and the River Og near Marlborough.

These winter bournes are important nursery waters for trout. Mr Mantle said he feared for crayfish, lamprey, bullhead and other fish species as well as the insect and plant life.

Thames Water wants to increase abstraction on the river but this is opposed by the Environment Agency who want it reduced. A decision by an inspector is expected soon.

Yesterday several hundred brown trout were also rescued from the upper reaches of the River Pang, near Frlsham, Berkshire.

The fish were caught by agency staff yesterday and moved downstream.

In the Midlands the agency announced plans to release water from the Shropshire groundwater system and



Jenny Woodall has given up trying to fight the drought and is choosing Mediterranean plants instead

Clywedog dam at the source of the Severn. The river is flowing at a third of its seasonal average.

The agency also announced restrictions on farmers in the region reducing or banning abstraction.

The early drought is also causing unusual behaviour among animals like badgers. Several county wildlife trusts have been contacted by the public claiming that badgers are entering gardens in search of alternative food because the ground is so hard that they cannot find worms.

Weather, page 24

Grassland fires reach record

THE number of fires has reached a record high after a dramatic increase in heath and grassland blazes caused by dry summers, according to figures published yesterday (Richard Ford writes).

The number of fires on heaths and grasslands increased by 131 per cent to 174,500 in 1995, with August the peak month for the destruction of gorse, heather and grass.

The Home Office figures highlight the potential risk to

heathlands this year if the dry spell continues.

The overall number of fires rose by 26 per cent compared with 1994, to a record 603,600.

The number of people who died in fires rose by 16 per cent to 808 in 1995, with 565 fatalities in house blazes.

A separate study of fires in the home, based on interviews with 16,500 people over the age of 16, estimated that there were 743,000 house fires in England and Wales in 1995 but only between 12 and 19 per

cent were attended by the fire brigade.

Two thirds of fires started in the kitchen and 14 per cent in the lounge. More than half of all the fires in the home were caused by cooking appliances or during the preparation of food.

The 1995 British Crime Survey found that fires were more common in areas of poverty, family instability, high unemployment and high levels of rented accommodation and housing density.

Small firms

Continued from page 1 multi-millionaire chairman of the JCB excavator manufacturer as an example of a business leader who backed Labour's aims. But yesterday Sir Anthony staged a Tory party rally, addressed by John Major at the company's Staffordshire headquarters.

"I am not a Labour voter. I haven't been, nor will I be," he said later, adding: "I think he [Mr Blair] was maybe trying to rope us in with him. But that isn't the case." Sir Anthony thought Mr Blair "impressive", but said there was a huge gap in experience between Labour's leader and Mr Major.

The letter to *The Times* is signed by five businessmen and women but says 79 other leaders of small companies had asked to be associated with its sentiments. The Conservatives have claimed to be the party of small business but now Labour will say that is no longer so.

Labour's business manifesto, being launched in the City this morning, will include plans to get more private funding into public projects.

In its election broadcast last night, three entrepreneurs — Anita Roddick, Sir Terence Conran and Gerry Robinson — and a former Bank of England adviser, Jonathan Charkham, endorsed Labour.

IRA tunnel photos prompt resign call

By NICHOLAS WATT, CHIEF IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

UNIONISTS called for the resignation of the head of the Northern Ireland Prison Service yesterday after the publication of photographs which apparently show IRA inmates digging a tunnel in the Maze Prison which was uncovered last month.

The pictures, which were sent to the Belfast news agency, Pacemaker, show masked terrorists removing soil from the tunnel which stretched 40ft from a block holding republican prisoners. One picture shows a prisoner in the tunnel as he passes a bag of earth to three other inmates at the tunnel entrance. Another shows three masked terrorists standing over a map of Ireland with a compass.

Prison sources said that the pictures looked genuine and seemed to have been taken at an early stage during the construction of the tunnel. A prison officer uncovered the tunnel on March 24. It measured 25ft square and stretched to within 30 yards of the prison's main perimeter fence.

Pacemaker, which is Belfast's oldest news picture agency, said that the photo-

graphs were dropped through its letterbox. The pictures were published on the front pages of Northern Ireland's three main newspapers yesterday.

The publication prompted calls for the resignation of Alan Shannon, the controller of prisons in Northern Ireland. Ian Paisley Jr, justice spokesman of the Democratic Unionist Party, said: "The public quite rightly expects heads to roll in this incident. The block was supposed to have been searched after the tunnel was found. Mr Shannon's position is untenable. Either he must provide an explanation or he must go."

Finlay Spratt, chairman of the Northern Ireland Prison Officers' Association, said the pictures showed how lax conditions were at the Maze. He said: "The tunnel was dug because prison officers were not allowed into the living environment of the paramilitary prisoners unless they got their permission."

A prison source said that Mr Shannon would not be resigning. The source said that the Maze housed hundreds of dangerous prisoners none of whom had escaped.

Challenge over cell death can go ahead

The family of Wayne Douglas, whose death in police custody led to riots in Brixton, won High Court permission yesterday to challenge the inquest jury's verdict. Mr Douglas, 25, of Sydenham, south London, died in December 1995 after his arrest as a burglary suspect. Last year a jury in Southwark decided that the death was accidental after heart failure prompted by his arrest. Yesterday it was argued that the coroner did not properly explain to the jury the possibility of a verdict of unlawful killing. Mr Justice Forbes accepted that this was "an arguable case".

Anti-gun cinema advert proceeds

An attempt by shooting enthusiasts to block an anti-gun cinema advertisement failed yesterday. The Advertising Standards Authority said that although it had received 50 complaints about the advertisement, it would not consider them until after the advertisement had been screened. The commercial, funded by Snodgrass, which wants to see handguns banned in the wake of the Dunblane massacre, is to be shown from today.

Duke to attend peace exercise

The Duke of York is to visit Zimbabwe from April 15-17 at the invitation of President Mugabe. He will watch Exercise Blue Hungwe, a multinational peacekeeping exercise involving South Africa, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Malawi, Swaziland, Mozambique, Namibia and Tanzania. Britain has contributed £300,000 towards the exercise, and is helping to run it with observers from a British military team based in Zimbabwe.

Royal Opera's 'exile' plans

The Royal Opera announced that it would stage nine new productions during its first year away from Covent Garden, while the house is renovated, and played down threats of industrial action over pay. Nicholas Payne, director of the Royal Opera, confirmed that they would present works at the Barbican, the Shaftesbury Theatre, the Albert Hall and the Festival Hall. Plácido Domingo will sing Parsifal in a concert performance.

Solicitor fined for violin lies

William Bridge, 61, a solicitor, of Chelsea, southwest London, was fined £5,000 by the Solicitors' Disciplinary Tribunal yesterday for lying about a reward which had been offered by an insurance company for the return of a famous antique violin worth £100,000. The violin, the Rocca, disappeared in 1984 just before its owner, a member of the BBC Symphony Orchestra, was to have taken part in a concert.

Nick Park makes chicken film

Two Plasticine chickens, Rocky and Ginger, are to be the stars of the first full-length feature film by Nick Park, the British Oscar-winning animator. Park, creator of Wallace and Gromit, will begin work on the 90-minute film next week. *Chicken Run* is set on a sinister Yorkshire chicken farm in the 1950s. The script is by the playwright Jack Rosenthal. The film will be made at the Aardman animation studios in Bristol.

Twitchers turn gumshoe in odd finding

By AUDREY MAGEE

ORNITHOLOGISTS in Holland and Scotland have discovered something strange is afoot.

Bird watchers from both countries have been taking part in a quirky study, which shows that Dutch people more often lose their left clogs to the sea while Scottish fishermen tend to lose their right wellies.

While monitoring dead birds on both sides of the North Sea, ornithologists began to record the shoes found washed up on the shoreline. In Holland, twice as many left shoes are washed up, while in Scotland right shoes significantly outnumber the left shoes found on the coastline.

The footwear study began last year when Martin Heubeck met Mardik Leop-

pold, a Dutch ornithologist, at an international seabird studies conference in Glasgow. In an article in the *Shetland Bird Club Newsletter*, Dr Heubeck said: "Dr Leopold claimed it was a little-known fact that, due to some physical process or other, more left than right shoes washed ashore on beaches, at least in the Netherlands."

"At the time I put this down to him being more used to drinking Heineken than Eighty Shilling, but now Kees Camphuysen's survey on the shores of the Dutch island of Texel seems to bear out his claim." In February Dr Heubeck began counting shoes while undertaking his count of dead birds washed up along 300 miles of Scottish coastline.

Where the Dutch had found 63.5 per cent of intact left

footwear items, he turned up 59.6 per cent of right ones on Shetland's shores. The mystery deepened when he discovered that, where only the soles remained, there were more left-footers on the east coast of Shetland than the west.

Dr Heubeck said the find-

ings quite astounded him. He suspects that study of a larger sample may clear up the problem and plans to continue gathering sandals, trainers, clogs and wellies on his surveys to monitor the number of birds that are killed by oil pollution.



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Accused was framed in divorce deal

Husband cleared of attempting to poison wife's tea

By TIM JONES

THE man accused of trying to harm his wife by putting rat poison in her morning tea yesterday walked free after a jury accepted his claims that she had framed him in order to get a better divorce settlement.

The jury at Northampton Crown court took just over two hours to find William Down, 50, not guilty of attempting to administer poison to his wife Linda with intent to injure, aggrieve or annoy.

The judge had discharged the jury from giving a verdict on the four original charges of attempting to administer poison with intent to endanger life. Mr Down, 50, left the dock to be hugged and kissed by the two eldest of the couple's four children, Katherine and Jennifer, who had been in court every day to support him.

Shaking with emotion, Mr Down, a self-employed mechanic, said outside the court: "I am very relieved. The whole trial has been an enormous ordeal. I just want to get back to a normal life."

Mrs Down, 50, who was due to celebrate her 30th

wedding anniversary later this year, had claimed her "mean and obsessive" husband put poison in her tea before taking it to her in bed. She noticed it started to smell strange and became wary of her husband when he started to behave in a "really kind and thoughtful way" towards her.

Mr Down told the court he and his wife, who he said regularly took herbal remedies, had been experimenting with home-made medical cures. He had carried out his own research after suffering a stroke in May 1993 and knew of the well-known medicinal qualities of warfarin, a blood-thinning agent used in rat poison.

After experimenting with that, he said, they then tried his successor, difenacoum, which is found in the product Ratak. Mr Down told the jury: "We both took it for three to six months. I did not notice any change in my health but my wife was claiming beneficial effect."

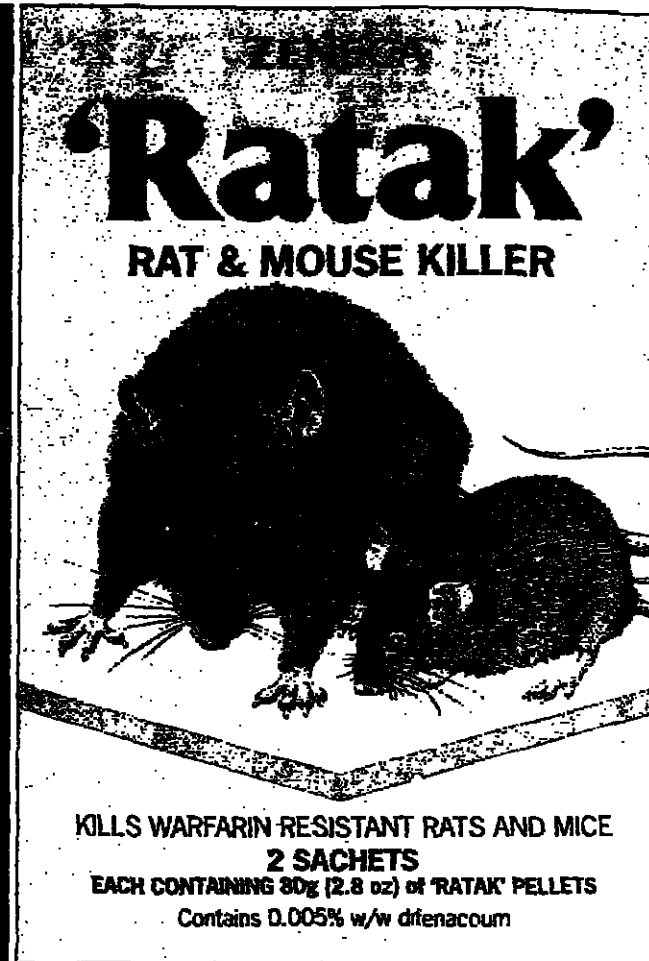
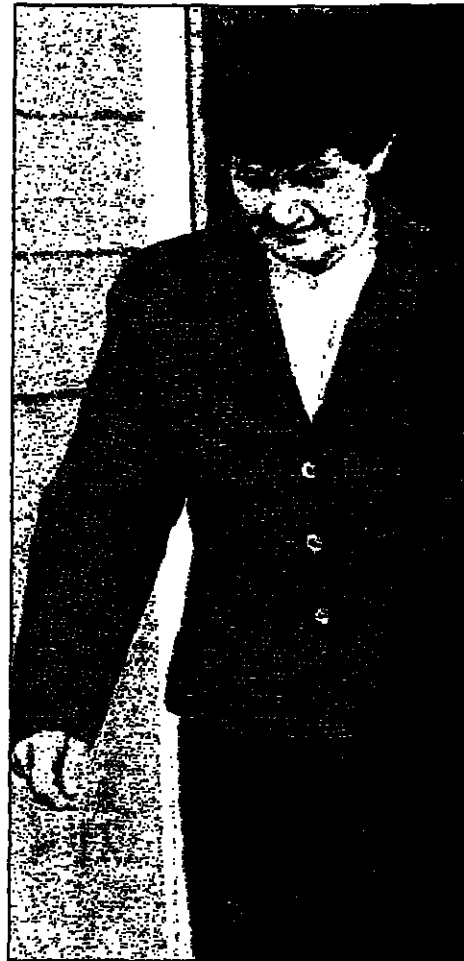
Asked how he took it, Mr Down, who was said to have become obsessive about his

health after suffering a minor stroke, said: "In the morning tea, I wanted to stop. I did not think it was doing any good."

"She said that she wanted to carry on so I said that I would put it in her morning tea. She can be very determined. I pretended to put the solution in the tea, but I never did. I moved the bottle around and poured some down the sink. It was all a general pretence."

Mr Down said he had to go to the lounge cupboard where the poison was kept and open and close the door because his wife could hear him from upstairs. He claimed that in bringing the case his wife wanted to frame him in order to achieve a better divorce settlement.

During the three-day trial, the jury of seven women and five men was told that the couple's marriage had "hit the rocks" after Mr Down was made redundant in the 1980s. Mrs Down, of Burton Latimer, Northamptonshire, claimed her husband was a misogynist who had never got on with his mother and had transferred that dislike to her. She described how, when her



Mr Down, right, claimed he had used a substance found in Ratak, a rat poison, to make a health tonic that his wife, left, had found beneficial

husband began taking her two cups of early-morning tea, she kept a jam jar in the bedroom to tip it into once he had left for work.

Last August, the court was told, she took her samples to the police for analysis. They hid a surveillance camera in the house and three officers who had been hiding in the bushes burst in and arrested Mr Down after seeing him

take the rat poison from the lounge cupboard and into the kitchen as he prepared to make tea and take it to his wife in her flowery white mug. But while traces of Ratak were found in the samples from Mrs Down's jam jar, there were none in the cup he had made that morning.

After the verdict, Mrs Down refused to come to the door of the semi-detached home she

once shared with her husband. She was told of the jury's decision in a telephone call from the police. Her youngest son, Christopher, 16, said: "My mother does not want to comment."

Detective Sergeant Mick Neeson, who led the investigation, refused to comment on the outcome of the case. But he said he was satisfied with the way in which the investigation

was conducted. "Our approach was sensitive and thorough throughout this difficult case."

Warfarin is an anti-coagulant drug prescribed to prevent blood clotting. It is widely used to prevent strokes and to treat some kinds of heart attack, which are caused by blood clots lodging in the blood vessels of the brain and heart starving the organs of

oxygen. However, if too high a dose of warfarin is given it can cause abnormal internal bleeding by preventing the blood from clotting.

Regular blood clotting tests are therefore carried out to allow adjustment of the dosage. The drug has the same effect in rats but because they receive an excess dose in food, it works as a poison and they die.

Mistress informed police of lover's 'perfect murder' plot

By PAUL WILKINSON



Teresa Kerwin: the lover of Mr Tiernan

A MAN who killed his wife believed he had committed the perfect murder until his mistress told police five years later that the death was not an accident, a court was told yesterday.

For five years David Tiernan went unsuspected after an inquest recorded a verdict of accidental death on his wife, Pauline, in 1989. But in 1994 the lover of the wealthy builder told detectives that he had confessed to her that he had smothered his wife and faked her death to look as if she had been electrocuted by faulty wiring.

Sheffield Crown Court was told yesterday that although Mr Tiernan, 47, was having an affair he killed his wife because she also had a lover and

he feared the consequences of divorce. Mrs Tiernan, 38 at the time of her death, ran a gift shop at Hornsea, East Yorkshire. On January 31, 1989, she was found dead face down on the floor by her father, Joseph Clibley, who lived with the family.

But in July 1995 the body of the mother of four was exhumed after Teresa Kerwin, Mr Tiernan's lover, told police of his alleged confession. A new post-mortem examination confirmed that death was due to asphyxia. He had allegedly admitted to her that he put his hand over his wife's face, smothering her, before driving off to Hull to set up an alibi. Mr Tiernan denies murder.

Robert Smith, QC, for the prosecution, said: "Pauline Tiernan was found

dead in a small office at her home. There were no marks of violence upon her and various features made it seem as if that she had received an electric shock, from which she died."

He said a pathologist told an inquest in May 1989 that Mrs Tiernan choked on her own vomit as a result of electric shock. The inquest returned a verdict of accidental death. "For many years that remained unchallenged, until 1994 when the police began investigations into the death. Teresa Kerwin told them that David Tiernan had admitted to her he had killed his wife by asphyxiating her, then 'making it appear she had died from an accidental electric shock'."

A Home Office pathologist's findings were consistent with asphyxia as

the cause of death. In March last year Tiernan was arrested and charged with the murder. Mr Smith said: "David Tiernan deliberately killed his wife... The motive is clear. Pauline had developed an affection for another man and David Tiernan was jealous. He was upset by the potential consequences of a divorce on his children, his finances and his standing in public. He told her father if he could not have her nobody else would."

On the day Mrs Tiernan died, their children were at school, two labourers were working at the house and Mr Tiernan and Mr Clibley were at home. Mr Smith said Mr Clibley went to see a friend, Mr Tiernan drove off but returned and killed his wife. The trial continues.



A wedding picture of David Tiernan and his wife, Pauline, whom he denies murdering in January 1989

Official turned to gambling after losing on lottery

By STEPHEN FARRELL AND AUDREY MAGEE

A COUNCIL official who missed out on his office syndicate's £10 million National Lottery jackpot has been sacked for alleged fraud after running up huge gambling debts.

Tony George, 35, was dismissed from Camden Borough Council's homeless persons unit in north London this week after a disciplinary hearing found him guilty of gross misconduct. He was deputy manager of the unit, where 33 officials each won £304,724 in January 1996 on a double rollover lottery jackpot.

Two weeks before their numbers came up, George, who earned £35,000 a year, had refused to pay the £26 stake, complaining that it was too much. He is said to have sold their names to a tabloid newspaper for £5,000 then turned to gambling on scratchcards, horses and in casinos.

Earlier this year he allegedly ordered nearly £3,000 of computer equipment without approval, apparently intending to sell it on and keep the money. A senior official reported him to council fraud investigators after seeing him receive a parcel from a computer company which no lon-

ger supplied the department. A council spokesman said last night: "We have acted swiftly and decisively in this case because Camden never tolerates fraud by its staff. An official has been dismissed for gross misconduct. He is believed to have given himself up to police after a senior council officer's suspicions were aroused. Police investigations are continuing into the alleged theft."

A Scotland Yard spokesman confirmed that a man had been to Mitcham police station in south London on March 22 in connection with alleged misappropriation of funds and was bailed to return on April 24.

Christine Winter, the unit manager and lottery syndicate leader, refused to comment last night. There was no sign of George at his semi-detached three-bedroom mock-Tudor house in Streatham, south London.

The lottery syndicate all went straight back to work after their win. Two months ago the department was awarded a charter mark for being one of the most efficient in the country by guaranteeing that their 2,000 annual applicants were seen within 15 minutes of arrival.

'Mrs Merton' star mourns death of ex-boyfriend, 27

By ALEXANDRA FREAN, MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

CAROLINE AHERNE, the actress who plays the chat-show host Mrs Merton, was being comforted by her family last night after the death of her former boyfriend, Matt Bowers. Mr Bowers, a former sports researcher with Granada television, died of stomach cancer in Hertfordshire, just two months after being diagnosed with the disease. He was 27.

Mr Bowers hit the headlines last year after being involved in a public punch-up with Miss Ahern's ex-husband, Peter Hook, former guitarist with the band New Order and currently in the charts as Monaco. It happened during a



Caroline Ahern: 'terribly upset'

chance encounter at the launch of Bill Wyman's Sticky Fingers restaurant in Manchester last November.

After a heated exchange Mr Bowers reportedly swung a fist at Hook, while the guitarist's new fiancée, Rebecca Jones, looked on in shock. According to some reports, Miss Ahern, who married Mr Hook in July 1994 but left him in April 1996, was accidentally kicked in the stomach in the mêlée. Mr Bowers resigned from Granada shortly afterwards.

Mr Bowers and Miss Ahern first met at Granada when the actress was filming her spoof chat show as Mrs Merton for the BBC. They shared a house in a East Didsbury, Manchester, for several months. They split up on Boxing Day.

Miss Ahern's agent said last night that she was "terribly upset" at the news. She spent last night with relatives at her family at her home in Manchester, but was too emotional to comment.

Granada Television said in a statement: "We are all very saddened at Matt's tragic death so young. We offer our deepest condolences to his family." Miss Ahern is working on a new Granada sitcom.

Let us pray, in the interests of science

THE power of prayer is to be tested in an experiment, it emerged yesterday. Out of three groups of 600 patients awaiting heart surgery, two groups will be told they may be prayed for. One will be prayed for, and the other will not. A third group will be aware they are being prayed for, and will be used to determine if knowledge has a psychosomatic effect on their symptoms.

The experiment is being funded by the John Templeton Foundation, a charitable organisation aimed at the progress of religion, of which Russell Stannard, Professor of Physics at the Open University, is one of 12 trustees. Professor Stannard said the purpose of the experiment, to be carried out at three American hospitals for two years, was merely "to find out what happens". "The foundation

is not going into the experiment hoping that there will be a positive effect. We are just genuinely interested in any experimentation that has a bearing on religion," he said.

"Obviously, if it turns out that there is a positive result, that the group being prayed for, but unaware of this, does better than the group not being prayed for, that will be extremely interesting. It would open up whole areas of research, such as different methods of prayer, and prayer for different illnesses."

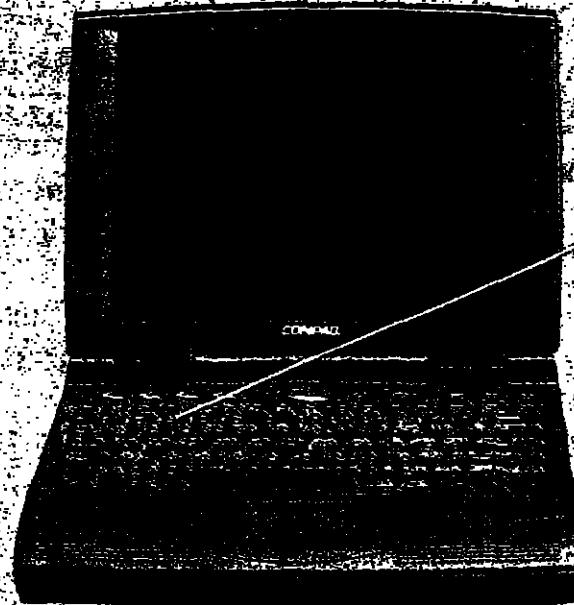
Professor Stannard said a null result, showing no significant difference between the groups, would not necessarily prove that prayer didn't help. He said the control group — not included in the prayers of the special team — might pray for themselves and receive prayers from

close friends and family. "We can't stop people praying for themselves and, personally, I have a hunch that when people directly involved with the patients are praying, they're going to pray with such fervour and dedication, their prayers will have very much more effect than those of some stranger," he said.

In addition to this unaccounted-for prayer, God might prove problematical, according to Professor Stannard. "God's got a will of His own and might decide not to co-operate," he said, conceding that God might not exist.

He added that there could also be problems if prayer was found to have a positive result. Prayer could then be equated with hospital treatment, with vicars being called on to justify the closure of hospital wards, he said.

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National Trust bans deer-hunting on its land

By MICHAEL HORNSBY
AND ANDREW YATES

THE National Trust yesterday banned deer-hunting on its land in a move that is certain to intensify demands for the abolition of all hunting with dogs, including fox-hunting and hare coursing.

In a unanimous vote by its 52-member governing council, the trust said it would not renew licences for hunting red deer on its land on Exmoor and the Quantock Hills and fallow deer in the New Forest in Hampshire.

Licences for hunting red deer will be allowed to run until they

expire at the end of April, the end of the hunting season. Fallow deer licences have already expired and will not be renewed.

The trust also called on the next Government to investigate the suffering of other wild animals hunted and killed for sport in the light of new scientific evidence that deer-hunting is unacceptably cruel.

In the first sign of unease among landowners over the trust's reversal of its traditional neutrality on hunting, Lord Lonsdale, who leases 17,000 acres of the Lake District to the charity for a nominal rent, said he would consider refusing to renew the agree-

ment if there was a ban on fox-hunting on his land. The 7th earl said he was concerned that the trust's decision to ban deer-hunting could lead to a ban on fox-hunting.

The trust insisted yesterday that any decision on fox-hunting would be for Parliament to make rather than its own council. But it had previously said exactly the same about deer-hunting.

The trust's change of policy comes after a two-year study by Patrick Bateson, Professor of ethology at Cambridge University, showing that deer hunted by packs of hounds suffer extreme stress before they are killed. The study

was commissioned by the trust at a cost of £165,000.

Yesterday National Trust scientists said that foxes hunted with hounds might well be shown to suffer similar stress to that experienced by deer if subjected to the same tests. A comparable study of foxes, taking blood samples from animals after they had been killed, would be feasible, they said, provided the hunts themselves co-operated. Dr Bateson said foxes could not automatically be assumed to respond in the same way as deer because they naturally roamed greater distances and were probably fitter. He said any stress

suffered by foxes during hunting would have to be measured against the welfare implications of alternative means of culling them, such as shooting. Because they were smaller targets, a higher proportion of foxes were likely to be left wounded rather than killed outright.

The council said in a statement that it believed it would be "timely" in the light of the Bateson report for the Government to set up an expert committee to review the findings of the 1951 Scott Henderson report on hunting. Set up by the Antler Government, the report concluded that the suffering of hunted animals was not sufficient to warrant

any state interference with field sports. Trust members voted seven years ago, albeit by a narrow majority and on a small vote, to ban deer-hunting, but the ruling council had refused to act on the vote until yesterday. Charles Nunneley, trust chairman, said the difference now was that "we have evidence [of animal suffering] that makes it a matter of scientific fact and not just a matter of emotion."

Kevin Saunders, of the Legal Against Cruel Sports, said: "We are delighted. We have been campaigning for this for years. We are now calling upon all political parties to make their positions

clear and ban all types of hunting." The trust ban affects some 15,400 acres in Devon, Somerset and Hampshire. Another 1,900 acres of land owned by the trust on Exmoor is covered by a legally-binding covenant, agreed with the original donor, that hunting should continue. This will not be affected.

Four stag-hunts — the Devon and Somerset Stag-hunts, the Tiverton Stag-hunts, the Quantock Stag-hunts and the New Forest Buck-hunts — use trust land. The ban could force the Quantock Stag-hunts to disband and will severely disrupt the Devon and Somerset.

SUSANNAH BIRNEY

Exmoor bays for blood of 'ignorant city-dwellers'

By BILL FROST

SUNLIGHT glinted on hip flasks as members of the Devon and Somerset Stag-hounds gathered yesterday to toast an Elizabethan tradition and curse their critics.

An isolated corner of Exmoor has been united in opposition against moves to ban the pursuit of red deer. In a gesture of anger and defiance, the hunt fielded a mid-week meet of 200 riders and 500 followers.

High on a hill above the valley where R.D. Blackmore set his novel *Lorna Doone*, ruddy-cheeked farmers and trippers as far afield as the West Midlands watched as the hunt cornered a young stag in a copse. Followers have occupied the same vantage point at Pitcombe Down since Elizabeth I declared Exmoor "a royal forest" where her loyal subjects might hunt red deer.

Spluttering with indignation, Peter Locke, a hunt member for most of his 63 years, described the report which revealed the great suffering inflicted on hunting deer as "bloody vexing". He described Dr Patrick Bateson, who conducted the research, as "a vegetarian troublemaker and little who knows nothing about country life". A

73-year-old farmer in a new Range Rover choked on his sandwich at the mention of the National Trust. "It's a disgrace. Hunting red deer is a central part of our way of life. What do city people know about us and keeping pests like them under control? If they ban it, Exmoor will die. Many around here depend on the hunt for their livelihood."

In the Doone Valley below, the hounds bayed as the hunt moved on. Once again their quarry, a fleet-footed young stag, had evaded his tormentors. Not for long though. An hour later it was cornered by hounds before being shot.

John Burrow, a foot follower for most of his life, applauded the speed of the stag. He also castigated the National Trust over the move to limit his hunt's country by at least 12,000 acres.

"The Devon and Somerset performs a vital function on Exmoor. Unless you control the red deer, crops would be devastated, worse still, hundreds of people who rely on the hunt for their livelihood would go under," he said.

"There's not one single farmer on National Trust land here who supports a ban. They love the deer but know they have to be kept in check."



The Devon and Somerset Stag-hounds setting off yesterday. The mid-week meet attracted a record 200 riders and 500 followers, who were furious at the National Trust's decision

Foot followers had cheered the hunt at the meet an hour or so earlier. They too were furious over the threat to their field sport. Jim Palmer, who travelled to Exmoor from West Sussex yesterday "to show solidarity", was white with rage. "It makes me so angry. Stag hunting has been a way of life here since the days of Good Queen Bess. The National Trust ban means that the deer will have a much wider area to range over — they are not stupid. They will cause havoc and where is the sense in that?"

The hillside beech woods, heather and gorse provide ideal cover for the red deer, say hunt members. Quite often the Devon and Somerset Stag-hounds fail to make a

kill. Diana Scott, yesterday's joint master, was full of admiration for their prey. "I love the deer and that's the paradox: the love of deer is linked with the love of the chase. Hunting keeps the deer's natural awareness alive. To take away that wildness would be terrible. The depth of knowledge among those who live among them is incredible. The deer are at the very heart of Exmoor," she said.

At yesterday's meet — there are only half a dozen or so left before the season ends — Tom Yandle, the chairman of the Devon and Somerset Stag-hounds, rallied his troops in the face of defeat. He said he was unable to accept the conclusion of the National

Trust report. "Any ban without a mutually agreed deer management scheme would cause immense suffering for the herd and the people who farm this land," he added.

In Exford, home to the hunt kennels and stables, there was fury last night at the ban. John Kent, the Devon and Somerset's farrier, said the area would be blighted.

"My yard will be empty without the hunt. I will lose 75 per cent of business and have to lay off the two people I employ. In fact, I'll probably have to look for another job. I don't hunt myself, but I know that it is vital here economically and environmentally. Who are these people who destroy a vital piece of rural life?"

Veteran huntsman fights back

By MICHAEL HORNSBY

A FORMER Lord Justice of Appeal, who at the age of 79 has to be hoisted on his horse to ride to hounds, is leading the fight by the West Country deer-hunting community against scientific evidence which claims to show that the sport is unacceptably cruel.

Sir Robin Dunn, who lives near Porlock in Somerset, said it was outrageous that the National Trust had decided to ban deer-hunting on the property it owned without bothering to consult the hunts or those who had donated land for hunting. "I retired early

from the Court of Appeal in 1984 so that I could spend more time deer-hunting," he said. "I have been hunting with the Devon and Somerset Stag-hounds for 55 years and still turn out occasionally."

The family of Sir Robin's wife gave 3,000 acres on Exmoor to the trust in 1934 with a covenant that hunting should continue there. Sir Robin also chairs the Badworthy Land Company, which owns 7,000 acres on Exmoor, with hunting rights over a further 50,000 acres.

Sir Robin said he had no plans to give up hunting in the light of the report by Professor

Bateson, nor did he see why anyone else should. "My own experience is at variance with some of what is in the report. I do not accept that deer are sedentary animals not used to running far."

"Farmers down here can recognise individual deer. They say they often see a deer that has been hunted grazing contentedly on its home patch a day or two later as if nothing had happened."

The National Trust said it had no legal power to breach the covenant covering the land donated by the family of Sir Robin's wife, but hoped he would reconsider his views.

Mercenary leader says rebels put gun to head

By MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

THE former British Army colonel whose team of 65 heavily armed mercenaries was hired by the Papua New Guinea Government to help put down a nine-year rebellion told yesterday how he was threatened with death when he was detained by a break-away element of the country's defence force.

Tim Spicer, a former lieutenant-colonel of the Scots Guards, said he was assaulted after he and his fellow mercenaries had been seized by soldiers who rebelled against the decision of Sir Julius Chan, the Prime Minister, to bring in mercenaries to quell the secessionist guerrilla war in the tiny island of Bougainville.

Mr Spicer was talking for the first time after returning home from his ordeal. He was released from detention this week when firearm charges against him were dropped. At a press conference in the Hilton hotel in Park Lane, Mr

Spicer, supported by his wife, Caroline, admitted that his company, Sandline International, had purchased massive firepower as part of the deal to help the Papua New Guinea Government in its conflict with the Bougainville rebels.

Under the \$36 million (£24 million) contract signed in January, Mr Spicer had bought helicopter gunships,



Spicer: ordeal after rebel forces seized him

mortar launchers, heavy machineguns and a whole array of weapons to make up for the country's lack of firepower.

In a quiet voice, Mr Spicer, who was Military Assistant to General Sir Michael Rose when he was Commander of UN forces in Bosnia, agreed that he and his team fitted the strict definition of mercenaries but he denied they were the "nasty" stereotypes the "Rambo and Dogs of War". During his captivity, the former British officer had an automatic pistol put to his head on several occasions and spent several days in a barred cell. He said he was threatened when he refused to co-operate with his captors.

The helicopters and other weapons have remained in Papua New Guinea, and Mr Spicer is now trying to negotiate with Sandline to get its outstanding £12 million or the return of the equipment.

Judge hit car while five times over limit

By FRANCES GIBB
LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

A COUPLE whose car was hit by a crown court recorder nearly five times over the legal limit for drinking and driving demanded yesterday that he be dismissed and jailed.

A Range Rover driven by John Reeder, QC, 48, who sits as a part-time crown court judge, hit a car belonging to Cliff Simmonds, a former fireman, and his girlfriend Tina Carpenter at 10.45am. They suffered whiplash and minor cuts and bruises when their Toyota Celta car, cart-wheeled down the A435 near Cheltenham, Gloucestershire.

Mr Simmonds, 48, said: "He should be jailed. A man in his position should set an example. How can he sit in judgment on others after this?" Reeder, of Tolleshunt D'Arcy, Essex, admitted drink-driving and was freed on unconditional bail after Cheltenham magistrates called for a pre-sentence report.

The Lord Chancellor's Department said the case would be considered after the court had imposed sentence. In 1994 the Lord Chancellor made clear that drink-driving was to be regarded as "so grave" as to amount to misbehaviour, for which judges can be dismissed.

Soft fruit may not be green

By ROBIN YOUNG

BRITISH strawberries are performing the ozone layer. The Food Commission, a consumer watchdog group, found that only the Co-op, Safeway and Asda of the leading food stores said that some of their strawberries this year would be produced without using methyl bromide, a pesticide that harms the ozone layer. Even then the environmentally-friendly fruit will not be labelled as such.

Strawberries grown in the Netherlands, Germany and Denmark are produced without methyl bromide.

Advertised promotions include: Asda: boneless pork leg £2.99 per kg, chicken 1.8kg for £3.49, premium cod fillets in batter 600g for £2.85, cauliflower 50p each, strawberries 420g for 99p. Budgens: sirloin steak £9.99 per kg, unsmoked Dutch back bacon rashers 250g for £1.49, roast turkey breast 60p a 1/4 lb, tomatoes 750g for 79p. Co-op (CWS): whole roast chicken

900g for £3.39, family pork pie 99p, frying steak 15.38 per kg, chestnut mushrooms 22g for 66p, baking potatoes 15p a lb, Spanish strawberries 22g for 99p.

Harrods: Thai fried aubergine 100g for £1.59, Thai special noodles 100g for 99p, Thai chicken and mango salad 100g for £2.29.

Islands: pork chops 1.36kg for £3.49, salmon fish cakes eight for 99p, hake fillets 600g for £1.99, chicken chow mein 300g for 99p, beef in blackbean sauce 340g for 99p, strawberry cheesecake 490g

for £1.49, Irish Cream liqueur gâteau eight portions for £2.99, Kwik Save: Grampian chicken 3 to 3.4kg for £4.49, Birds Eye garden peas 907g for £1.25, Bonne Maman strawberry jam 340g for £1.25.

Marks & Spencer: pizza-style tomato and three cheese pizza 390g for £1.99, panacotta pot dessert 140g for 79p, rich Italian ground coffee 227g for £1.99.

Morrisons: braising steak £3.72 per kg, topside/silver-side £4.16 per kg, pork chops £3.06 per kg, frozen

skinless haddock fillets 800g for £2.99, Indian balti meals 400g for £1.99, Celtic cabbage 29p each, caneloupes melons 99p each.

Safeway: pork chops eight (900g) for £3.99, Scottish salmon steaks 570g for £3.99, cucumbers 49p each, tomatoes 49p a lb, white tin bread 800g for 49p, grapes 99p a lb, strawberries 454g for £1.19.

Sainsbury's: turkey steaks four (500g) for £2.99, Danish unsmoked rindless back bacon 500g for £1.95, new potatoes 49p a lb, white tin bread 800g for 49p, grapes 99p a lb, strawberries 454g for £1.19.

Somerfield: sirloin steak £8.15 per kg, chicken steaks 153g for 99p, Quorn peppered grillsteaks 199g for £1.49, asparagus tips 125g for £1.64, new season English mini cucumber 29p each, Ottoman frangipanes six for 79p.

Tesco: boneless shoulder of pork £2.40 per kg, rump steak £7.99 per kg, lamb half leg £5.99 per kg, smoked haddock £2.47 a lb, whole lemon sole £2.49 a lb, cooked mussels 55p a 1/4 lb, strawberries 454g for 99p.

Waitrose: free-range chickens up to 2.3kg £2.99, diced braising beef 300g for £2.99, spiced pork sausages eight for £1.35, red onions 60p a lb, purple sprouting broccoli 400g for 99p, aubergines 75p a lb, Bon Rouge pears 50p a lb.

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Leave us in peace, vicar begs woman behind hate letters

By RUSSELL JENKINS

A VICAR yesterday told of a three-year hate campaign by a mystery woman who has bombarded him with letters, signing off with the words "God Bless".

The Rev John Ball, 55, has received more than 200 hate letters and obscene or silent telephone calls since he took over the parish of Hoylake, Merseyside, three years ago.

The letters, up to 12 pages long, accuse the vicar of having an affair with a teenage girl who occasionally attends the church. Some were written in lipstick. On one occasion a pornographic video was put through the letter box.

His wife, Ruth, wrote an anguished letter to the parish newsletter, *The Beacon*, pleading for the mystery writer to stop. She blamed the stress of the intimidation for causing a her husband's heart condition, which requires a triple bypass operation.

An intensive surveillance and forensic operation by Merseyside Police has failed to result in a conviction.

Mr Ball said: "The first anonymous letter I had, which was not particularly offensive, arrived three months after I became vicar of Hoylake. Before long I was being bombarded with four or five thoroughly obscene letters a week."

The writer mentioned a young woman who was "inap-

propriately dressed and not there for the right purpose". Eventually Mr Ball became alarmed and approached the church warden, the Bishop of Birkenhead and the police. All agreed that the best approach was to do nothing.

However, the hate campaign reached such a pitch that, at the request of the police, he brandished a bundle of letters in the pulpit and told the congregation that the writer had insulted every aspect of his faith and ministry. Even more seriously, he said, she was trying to destroy the church.

"Since then I have realised that the culprit may have been present, joining in our worship and receiving Holy Communion from me," Mr Ball said.

The letter writer changed tactics and, just before Easter 1995, clergy in Hoylake and Meols received letters purporting to come from the young woman. They alleged that the vicar was abusing her and that this was making her suicidal. The letters were so convincing that the young woman received telephone calls offering help.

Mr Ball said: "The girl was devastated by this. She was at a crucial stage of her education and, imagine, someone rings up and says 'I hear you are trying to commit suicide'." The letters stopped a year

ago after Mr and Mrs Ball received an anniversary card from the woman. Then, last October, a pornographic video called *Bon Appetit* arrived. Mrs Ball said the title was ironic because it arrived in the week of harvest supper, when they traditionally cooked for parishioners.

Mrs Ball also blamed the stress for a malignant tumour that will eventually blind her in one eye. "I would like the perpetrators to know the outcome of their evil work," she said in the newsletter. "I hope they are now satisfied."

Mrs Ball said that she and her husband had been healthy before coming to the area. They had enjoyed fell walking before he first became ill while walking on Ben Nevis. "Both the GP and cardiologist have said the stress of the last three years has been a great contributory factor to this," she said.

"People say these people are mentally deranged and sick but I think that is an insult to people who really are ill. I just hope they stop it and show my husband some respect at a difficult time. It would also be nice if they showed remorse."

The couple have received support from the Bishop Suffragan of Birkenhead, the Right Rev Michael Langrish, and the Bishop of Chester, the Right Rev Peter Forster. Thomas Eaton, the church warden, said that Mr Ball had the sympathy and support of the congregation.

Neville Gimson, 72, church secretary, said: "It must be the work of a complete nutcase. No one knows any reason for it. While the letters were coming John was a very worried man. He was certainly under strain."

A spokesman for Merseyside Police said: "The police investigation is now closed because of insufficient evidence to carry on. If any further evidence comes to light the inquiry will be reopened."

A spokesman for the two bishops said: "They have known about this situation since the letters arrived and have tried to offer whatever support they could in a very difficult situation for Mr Ball and his family."



The Rev John Ball and his wife, Ruth, outside their home

Protesters must leave runway site

By TIM JONES

PROTESTERS occupying the site of Manchester airport's planned second runway yesterday lost their court battle to avoid eviction from the site. A judge at the High Court sitting in Manchester granted applications for possession orders by the airport and contractors waiting to start work on the £172 million project.

The protesters, who were occupying a network of trees and tunnels on the site in the Bollin Valley near Styal, Cheshire, said they planned an immediate appeal against the decision.

The possession orders were granted to the airport and contractors AMEC and Tarmac by Judge David Shannon. They affect Daniel Hooper, 23, alias Swampy, and more than 50 other campaigners who declared themselves as part of the court action.

Hooper was not at the hearing yesterday because he was appearing before magistrates in Crewe, where he was fined £400 after admitting attempting to damage a fence on the site of the proposed runway, and £150 for breach of a conditional discharge. He was ordered to pay £50 costs.

'Forbidden fruits' of Bible revealed

By RUTH GLEDHILL, RELIGION CORRESPONDENT

THE Bible is not the book of peace, love and justice that everyone imagines but a collection of tales of violence, adultery, incest, rape, torture and murder, the details of which have been banned, censored or suppressed over the centuries, a new book claims.

In a new version of Bible stories, Jonathan Kirsh claims to have re-inserted explicit and graphic details of sadism, mutilation and deception. His version recounts Lot committing incest with his daughters, child molestation and sex as a matter of politics and diplomacy rather than love or lust.

From Genesis, he describes the rape of Dinah by a lovesick Canaanite prince, followed by the circumcision of every man in the prince's kingdom, and the mass murder of these men by Dinah's vengeful brothers.

From Judges, he takes the stories of the mercenary Jephthah who sacrificed his only daughter Shella to God for victory in battle, and of a "traveller" who gives his lover to satisfy the lust of a mob. After she is killed, he takes her body home and dismembers it, sending the pieces to the four corners of Israel in the

hope of inciting a war of revenge. From Samuel, he describes the rape of the Princess Tamar by her half-brother Amnon, the eldest son of King David.

Kirsh, a book critic for the *Los Angeles Times*, who has been studying the Bible for more than 20 years, says: "The frank descriptions of human passion in *extremis* that are preserved in the Book of Samuel are mostly overlooked by pious Bible readers, who seem to prefer David's psalms to his sexual adventures."

He says that over the centuries, embarrassed rabbis, priests and ministers have hidden the plain language of the original Hebrew behind euphemisms, unlikely interpretations or mistranslations.

"Today, most Bibles are unexpurgated and most of the translations are largely accurate and unabashed, but casual readers rarely find their way to the forbidden stories of the Bible because they simply do not know such stories exist and do not bother to look for them," he says.

The Harlot by the Side of the Road, Forbidden Tales of the Bible, Jonathan Kirsh, Rider, £18.99, published June 5.

Jack confronts Irish invaders

By ALAN HAMILTON

SCOTLAND, like the rest of Europe, is being invaded by Irish theme pubs with spurious names such as Scruffy O'Murphy's and Paddy McGinty's. A Glasgow brewery has decided to retaliate by launching a counter-measure — a Scottish theme pub.

All theme pubs are ersatz versions of a non-existent real thing. The new Jack's Bar in Aberdeen, being refurbished in tartan and hot haggis at a cost of £200,000 by Tennent's Taverns, will have none of the flavour of a real Scottish pub: no fights, head-butting, nasty sweet keg beer, inedible food, or a landlord's look that says "sassanach nancy-boy" if you ask for ice and lemon in your

gin. Instead, Jack's will establish unthinkably untraditional practices: staff in kilts, good food including haggis, stovies and mince and tatties, occasional patches of tartan on the walls, and a particularly repellent abomination of recent invention — scented whisky.

Pubs in Scottish cities are now as varied and sophisticated as anywhere, and few of them have the tartan wallpaper and plastic claymores that were once the hallmark of big brewery interior design. The best Scottish pubs, such as Milne's in Edinburgh or the Horseshoe Bar in Glasgow, have only ever played themselves, and have not succumbed to "theming".

Jack's is modelled on Tennent's theme pubs in

Glasgow and Inverness named "Jack Tamson's", which have enjoyed some success with tourists seeking atmosphere. In the Glasgow original, the atmosphere is helped along by a display of the heads of John Major, Margaret Thatcher and Bonnie Prince Charlie on bloody spikes, while a tape of Billy Connolly profanities plays in the gent's toilet.

Keith Parsons, of Tennent's, said: "We don't want the tourists to love them and the locals to hate them. The nationalist theme is gentle, and a bit of fun." Tennent's, a subsidiary of the English brewers Bass, denies that the Scottish pubs are an attempt to fight off the Irish theme pub incursions.



THERE was something distinctly odd about the window display (Emma Watkins writes). As four models lay in striking poses on the white leather sofa, one of them yawned and rolled over. Within moments a crowd of shoppers had gathered around the display at Selfridges in Oxford Street, London. The eight models taking part in the store's "Living in a

Shop dummies move with times

"Window" promotion responded to a magazine advertisement for "lively performance artists". The models, who will live in the shop's 14 main windows for five days next week, will amuse themselves by reading books and magazines, surfing the Internet and ringing friends

on their mobile telephones. Neil Sheppeck, 21, a drama student at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, plans to spend the week learning his lines for a production of *Macbeth*. "I'm not bothered about people staring at me, after all I do want to be an actor," he said. His

only complaint, shared by the three other models who were testing out the displays yesterday, was the heat. "It's like an oven in that window. I just hope the weather gets a bit colder." The volunteers, who will be paid £250 each for working Monday to Saturday, will do 90-minute shifts

before taking a 15-minute break. Natalie Saunders, 22, hopes to complete some Spanish homework for her course at Bromley College, southeast London. Nicky Eadon, 20, who works in Selfridges women's clothes department, views it as just another modelling job. She has modelled for a boutique in Kensington and at the London College of Fashion.

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Dixons

There's a great deal going on

Carey says school tables may harm moral education

By JOHN O'LEARY, EDUCATION EDITOR

CHURCH leaders united yesterday to give a warning of the long-term dangers to society from too much competition between schools.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr George Carey, told a London conference that there was a risk that schools would "ease off" on moral and spiritual education to concentrate on improving their positions in league tables.

Professor Gerald Grace, director of the Centre for Research and Development in Catholic Education, took up the theme, asking whether Catholic schools could strike a balance between "moral purpose and institutional survival". He joined Dr Carey in backing plans for national guidelines on moral values.

Professor Grace said: "As Catholic schools respond to contemporary market values in education and to the issues of institutional survival which they generate, a conflict of values is likely to result. Stated in the starkest form, it could be argued that there is little market yield or return for schools that continue to operate a preferential option for the poor."

The new climate was creating dilemmas for Catholic schools both over admissions and exclusions, Professor Grace said. Head teachers' traditional reluctance to exclude pupils was being tested

by the need to maintain discipline.

The conference, at London University's Institute of Education, focused on the proposals by the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority on values in education. Dr Carey said: "It is precisely because there are many pressures to make education more utilitarian — a better bargain for UK plc — that all of us, including teachers, need to insist on a balanced and rounded concept of education."

Dr Carey urged schools to teach more about marriage as the ideal form of the family,



Carey: risk of easing off on spiritual values

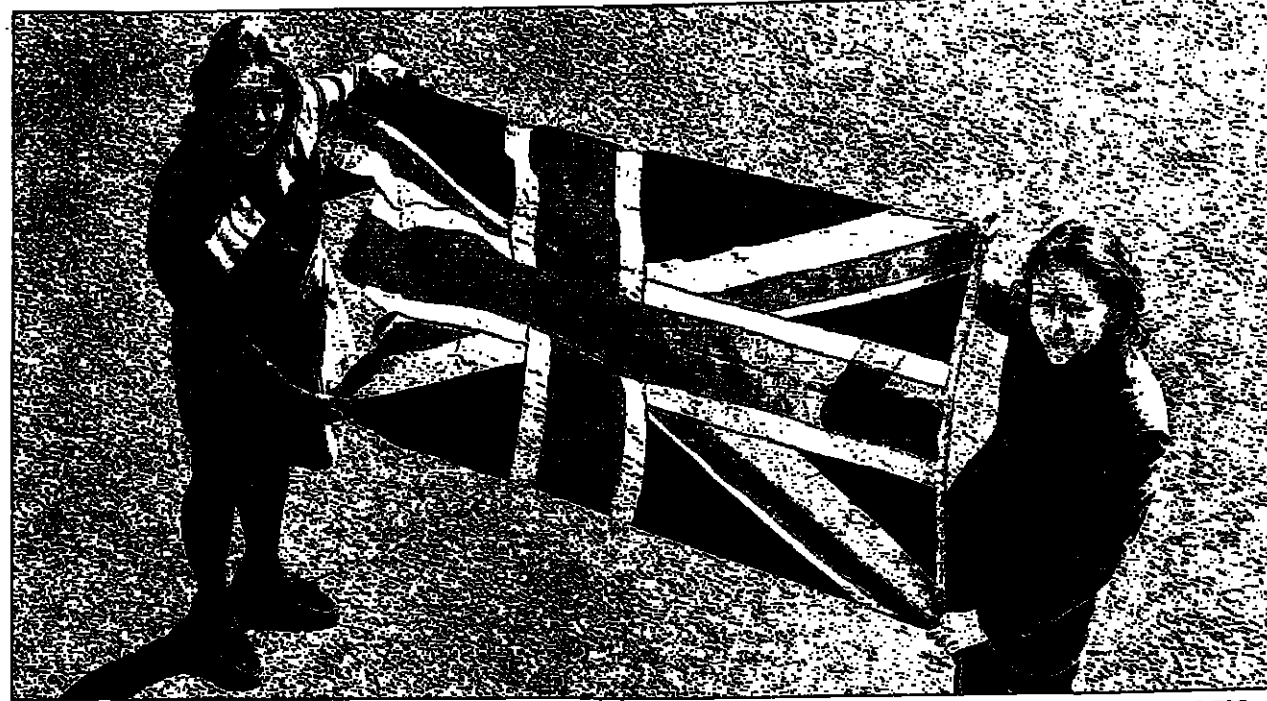
building on the statement of values produced by a 150-strong national forum convened by the authority. The forum declared its support for "marriage as the traditional form of the family, whilst recognising that the love and commitment required for a secure and happy childhood can be found in families of other kinds".

Dr Carey acknowledged that the statement stopped short of prescription about marriage, because it sought to describe the "shared values of a wide cross-section of society". There would be much he would encourage schools to add on the importance of marriage and the conditions needed for it to flourish.

Doug McAvoy, general secretary of the National Union of Teachers, said: "Teachers certainly are trying to convey to youngsters the difference between right and wrong. ... A real sensitivity on this issue is how you promote a moral code in respect of marriage. There has to be a recognition that in many of our schools, a lot of the youngsters are from one-parent homes."

But the Tory MP Harry Greenway, a former head teacher, said it was a "dereliction of duty" for schools not to present marriage as the ideal.

Education, page 39



Christie's staff display the flag which flew 97 miles from the Pole, the furthest south then reached. It made £20,500

Shackleton's flag flies high at sale

By JOHN SHAW

A STAINED Union Jack, frayed by fierce Antarctic winds, was sold for £20,500, five times the estimate, at Christie's in London yesterday. It was taken by Sir Ernest Shackleton on his famous 1907-09 expedition and flew at the furthest point south reached by man at the time, 97 miles from the Pole.

The souvenir was bought by John Levinson, an American ship's surgeon and great admirer of Shackleton (1874-1922). The sale of explorers' memorabilia also included a sprig of artificial holly, which decorated a plum pudding the size of a cricket ball, which Shackleton took to celebrate Christmas on his first polar journey, as part of Scott's



Ernest Shackleton, left, and his fellow explorers pose with the flag on the expedition

expedition of 1901-1903. The holly was bought for £4,025 along with the ration bag which was offered with it on behalf of two villages in Ireland.

Dingle and Annascaul are hoping to set up a memorial



centre commemorating Irish and Anglo-Irish antarctic explorers including Shackleton, who was born in Co Kildare, and Tom Kreen, who came from Dingle.

Dr Levinson, president of the Explorers Club of New

York between 1985 and 1987 said afterwards: "I am so excited to have bought this flag. Shackleton was my hero and the epitome of the true explorer — a gentleman, a good captain and a man who looked after his men."

Man who raped his daughters gets life

A 34-year-old man who raped two of his daughters after downloading images of child sex from the Internet has been jailed for life. His wife, 33, who was addicted to hardcore pornography and joined in the physical and sexual abuse of the girls, was sent to prison for 15 years at Swansea Crown Court.

They made videos of their eldest daughter, who was raped once a week from her 12th birthday, being beaten and sexually assaulted. The couple's five children, aged from 1 to 15, are in care.

Guerin arrest

Police made their sixth arrest in three days in the investigation into the murder in Dublin last June of Irish crime reporter Veronica Guerin. A man was detained early yesterday. They are already questioning a couple arrested as they arrived in Dun Laoghaire by ferry on Wednesday, and three men.

Pool claim fails

A trespasser who was paralysed for life when he dived into a school swimming pool and hit his head has lost a claim for damages. Mr Justice Butterfield ruled at Bristol Crown Court that Steve Webb, 24, of Truro, Cornwall, knew he was carrying out "an extremely dangerous" course of action.

Burns blaze

An 18th-century thatched cottage where the poet Robert Burns worked has been badly damaged in an arson attack. Firefighters managed to save many of the paintings and artefacts displayed at the The Heckling Shop gallery and museum in Irvine, Ayr. Burns worked at the cottage dressing flax during most of 1781.

Home on a disk

The splendours of an English stately home have been brought to life on a CD-Rom. The disk provides a guided tour of Holkham Hall, an 18th-century mansion on the Norfolk coast that has been home to seven generations of the Earls of Leicester. The tour includes commentary, music and 300 photographs.

Ale Bopp brew

A brewer has named his latest beer after the Hale-Bopp comet. Ale Bopp, brewed by Alan Thomson, of the Old Chimneys brewery in Market Weston, Suffolk, will be in selected pubs until the comet leaves the solar system. The beer, said to be very hoppy, will be launched at the Bury St Edmunds beer festival today.

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Frozen landscape points to life on Jupiter's moon

By Nigel Hawker
SCIENCE EDITOR

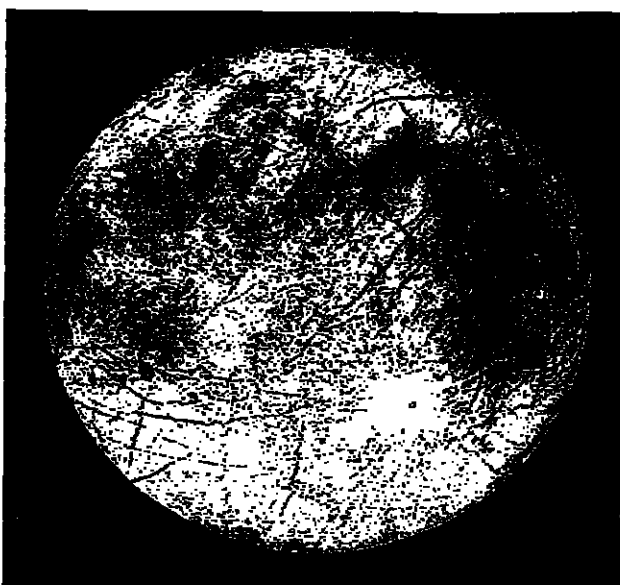
THE strongest evidence yet that Jupiter's moon Europa may contain life has come from images taken by the *Galileo* spacecraft.

Iceberg-like structures and flat white areas, looking strikingly similar to the scenery in the Arctic, suggest that beneath the ice lies an ocean of liquid water. If so, there is a good chance that simple life forms may have evolved there.

The newly released pictures, taken in recent months, are by far the most detailed yet of Europa. "These are really mind-blowing pictures," said Richard Terrile, an astronomer at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory. "How often is an ocean discovered? ... There is very strong evidence that there is an ocean here."

"It looks as though we found the smoking gun that points at this sub-surface ocean," Michael Carr, a geologist with the US Geological Survey in Menlo Park, California, said. Dr Carr said that the icy blocks shown in the pictures, each two to four miles across, appeared to have drifted apart. "You can push them back together to reconstruct the original pattern," he said.

This evidence of movement adds weight to the idea that underneath the frozen crust is a warm watery or slushy layer. The ice itself is probably about a mile thick, with the water below it rich in salts and other chemicals. Asked at a



Astronomers are planning to build a submersible spacecraft to explore beneath Europa's icy surface

press conference if this water could contain life, Dr Terrile said: "The water's probably bouillon, but we don't know if it's chicken soup."

Many scientists now believe that life on Earth may have begun at the bottom of the oceans, where liquid magma (molten rock) bubbles up, creating deep-sea vents or "smokers". Relatively high temperatures and the presence of many salts around the vents provide a good place for complex chemicals to develop.

In this week's *Science*, two German scientists support the theory with experiments con-

ducted in the laboratory. They added iron nickel sulphide to the model ocean in their experiments, as it is found in deep-sea vents, and found that it catalysed the conversion of gases into compounds containing bonds between carbon atoms, the first step towards life.

Hard evidence that Europa does contain life can only come from a purpose-built spacecraft that could penetrate the ice and explore the water beneath it, assuming it is there. The first plans for such a craft have already been made by an international

group of scientists who met in Pasadena yesterday. It would be 4ft 6in long and 6in in diameter, and would carry a small tethered submersible vehicle that would emerge when it sensed water and radio back a chemical analysis of what it found.

Nobody expects to find large life forms in Europa's oceans, but even the discovery of a humble bacterium would be remarkable. Oceanographer John Delaney of the University of Washington, who studies life near the Earth's deep sea vents, is enthusiastic about such a probe. Asked if the latest pictures were enough to convince him that there is life on Europa, he gave two replies. Speaking as a scientist, he said that NASA and oceanographers could devise experiments to answer the question. But, speaking from the heart, he said: "I'm sure there's life."

□ A solar flare on Monday sent an immense bubble of superheated gas towards the Earth at almost 2 million mph, but it is not expected to do any damage. Such flares can cause power black-outs, damage satellites, and disrupt communications, but this one was relatively small.

Its main interest is that it was the first flare to be observed forming at close quarters by the Solar and Heliospheric Observatory satellite. Much bigger flares are expected over the next few years as the Sun reaches the most active part of its 11-year cycle.



Galileo's image of Europa shows what scientists believe to be a frozen surface, possibly covering an ocean of liquid water. The flat area at the bottom shows where melt water has apparently broken through the ice and spread out before freezing

Pensioners insist they are no bunch of swells

By Tim Jones

AN INSURANCE company proposal for pensioners to be called SWELS — seniors with energetic lifestyles — has been greeted with derision by senior citizens.

Norwich Union, which sells thousands of pensions, chose the name from a competition after deciding the word pensioner was outdated and needed replacing because of its association with Zimmer frames, bathchairs and cardigans. But indignant pensioners yesterday made it clear they have no desire to be known by an acronym which suggests they are champagne-swilling toffs.

Jack Thain, general secretary of the National Pensioners' Convention, which has two million members, said they did not want to be stereotyped along with Yuppies and Dinkys. Mr Thain, 75, who rides a motorcycle and plans to do a parachute jump, said: "I could out-swim any of Norwich Union's swells. Folk in British Legions and Derby & Joan clubs will be choking on their tea and biscuits when they hear this suggestion."

"During the 1920s, the word swells was given to the nouveau riche, showing off their ill-gotten gains. Swells were not aristocrats or working people. They were more like loud-mouthed spivs."

Clive Burton, of the Association of Retired Persons Over 50, said: "I can't see it catching on. A lot of our members like being called recycled teenagers."

Baroness Castle of Blackburn, 86, the veteran Labour campaigner, dismissed SWELS as "ugly, confusing and altogether unacceptable". She said: "The word pensioner implies that people have contributed to and worked for their income. At a time when we are fighting for the rights of pensioners it is better to leave the word unchanged."

Liz Watson, for Norwich Union, said: "A lot of people see retirement as a chance for travel, seeing more of relatives and taking up new hobbies. We want people to think more positively about retirement."

Obese men run greater risk of prostate cancer

FAT men as well as fat women may be at greater risk of developing cancers of their reproductive system.

Doctors have been searching for 30 years for the explanation of the clear link between obesity and cancers of the breast and the lining of the uterus. An extensive survey in Sweden, reported in the journal of the National Cancer Institute and *Pulse*, that studied 135,000 construction workers for more than 18 years, found that overweight men were 1.4 times more likely to die of cancer of the prostate than their thinner workmates. Both the incidence of cancer of the prostate



and the death rate from the tumour were higher in obese men but the figures also showed that the tumour was more likely to have a fatal outcome when the patient was overweight.

Obesity is also associated with cancer of the gall bladder, and diet plays a role in the development of cancer of the stomach and gut. The association between cancer of

the digestive tract and weight is difficult to quantify as so often one of the first symptoms is weight loss.

The relationship between diet and cancer was discussed extensively at the meeting in Crete this week of cardiologists and nutritionists. The Mediterranean diet, containing large quantities of fruit and vegetables, rough bread and a high proportion of olive

oil rather than saturated fat, is very similar to that recommended by the American Cancer Society.

The role of olive oil in cancer prevention may become more clear after this week's conference in Rome, when its dietary benefits are being assessed. In Italy, Spain and Greece it has been shown that there is an inverse relationship between the amount of olive oil eaten and breast cancer — maybe because olive oil is a mono-unsaturated fat rather than a saturated one — but it is possible that one or more of the 200 compounds in olive oil has cancer protective powers akin to those

Hidden dangers of hormone therapy

By Jeremy Laurance, Health Correspondent

HORMONE replacement therapy, taken by thousands of menopausal women, may make breast cancer harder to detect in its earliest stages.

One in ten cases of breast cancer may escape detection during screening because the female hormone oestrogen, the main constituent of HRT, increases the density of the breast tissue, making it harder to pick up cancerous changes, researchers from the Imperial Cancer Research Fund say.

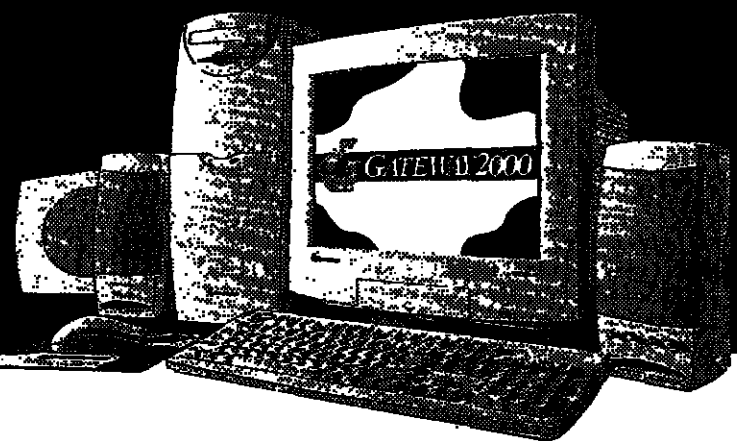
Dr Valerie Beral and colleagues at the Radcliffe Infir-

mary, Oxford, say that among women aged 50 to 64, who are screened every three years under the NHS programme, the number of "interval" cancers — detected between screenings — is increasing.

The incidence of interval cancers is higher in women aged 50-59, who are more likely to be on HRT. "These results indicate that among women screened in the United Kingdom in 1990, about 700 extra interval cancers would have been diagnosed," the authors say in *The Lancet*.

DR THOMAS STUTTAFORD

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Berlin judge says Iranian clerics were part of plot to wipe out dissidents abroad

Germany fearful of revenge as hit squad is jailed

FROM ROGER BOYES
IN BERLIN

GERMANY braced itself for revenge attacks yesterday after four members of an Iranian-led hit squad were jailed for the murder of Iranian Kurdish leaders in a Berlin restaurant.

"Europe's policy of critical dialogue died today in this courtroom," said Shaheen Gobbadi, a spokesman for the Iranian Resistance Council, a view that was echoed through much of the German political establishment.

In a crowded, heavily protected courtroom, Judge Frithjof Kubsch left no doubt that the 1992 assassinations were masterminded by the Iranian regime.

Two of the killers received life imprisonment, a third was jailed for 11 years, and the fourth was jailed for five years and three months.

The most controversial element of the sentencing was the way the judge pointed the finger at the Iranian regime. Ali Fallahian, the Intelligence Minister, for whom a German arrest warrant has already been issued, was said by the

judge to have played a supervisory role in the attack.

In a statement that was certain to trigger anger in Iran, Judge Kubsch said senior clerics were also part of the plot.

"The Iranian Government was not in the dock," the judge said at the outset of the trial. But, he said, it was critical to

Europe's policy of 'critical dialogue' died today in this courtroom

the case to show who first conceived of the murders and made them possible. The evidence heard over three and a half years suggested that the decision to kill dissidents abroad had been taken by the highest echelons of Iran's Government.

As soon as Judge Kubsch suggested that religious lead-

ers were implicated in the assassination, Iranian emigrés in the courtroom burst into applause. One dashed to inform hundreds of demonstrators outside, resulting in a huge roar of approval that could be heard inside.

Judge Kubsch said the key assassin was Kazem Darabi, a 38-year-old Iranian agent, who had contacts with his country's embassy in Bonn. Darabi was implicated in a 1982 attack on Iranian dissidents when he was still a student in Germany; he was protected on that occasion by the Iranian Embassy. After the restaurant assassinations ten years later, the Iranian Ambassador produced a 30-page letter attempting to discredit witnesses for the prosecution and defending Darabi.

The court was told that Darabi activated four Lebanese members of the Iranian-backed Hezbollah movement for the assassination. The Kurdish leaders, meeting on the fringes of a Socialist International session in Berlin five years ago, were regarded as prime targets for the Tehran regime.



Iranian dissidents chant "Stop the killer regime in Iran" outside the Berlin court which jailed a Tehran-controlled hit squad yesterday

The most politically important victim of the Mykonos restaurant attack was Sadegh Charafkandi, leader of the Democratic Kurdish Party of Iran. He and three others died in a hail of bullets.

□ Mission approval: The Berlin court yesterday identified Iran's Supreme Security Council as the planning centre for assassinations abroad. The 15-member council, which is directed by President Rafsan-

jani, gives final approval to missions initiated by the intelligence section of the President's office.

Permanent members of the council include the Intelligence Minister, the Foreign

and Interior Ministers, the Chief of the General Staff, the Commander of the Revolutionary Guards, and two representatives of the spiritual leader, Ayatollah Khamenei. The Berlin judge referred to

this religious involvement in murder plots yesterday, thus ensuring there will be angry protests after prayer meetings today.

Leading article, page 21

Israeli threat to reoccupy towns

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

ON YET another day of Israeli-Palestinian street battles, Yitzhak Mordechai, the Israeli Defence Minister, yesterday provoked Arab fury by claiming that the Jewish state would have "no difficulty" in retaking the eight West Bank towns handed over to Palestinian control since the 1993 peace deal.

It was the first time the threat of re-occupation has been made publicly and came only 36 hours after Benjamin Netanyahu, the Prime Minister, gave a warning that "one more major terrorist attack" on an Israeli target could finish the peace process.

Since Palestinian unrest erupted three weeks ago, Israel has made no secret of moving battle tanks, combat helicopters and snipers to positions around the main Palestinian towns. But ministers

have not spoken of wholesale re-occupation, a move some Israeli experts fear could plunge the Middle East into a new regional war.

Speaking during a tour of the occupied Golan Heights, Mr Mordechai said: "There would be no difficulty in recapturing Hebron or any other city, but we do not want to do that. We want the Palestinians to honour the agreements so we can make progress in the process and reach a solution without dangers or threats."

Leading Palestinians accused him of cranking-up tensions. Since the current crisis was sparked by the start in building a Jewish settlement at Har Homa in annexed east Jerusalem, 12 people — including three Jewish victims of a suicide bomber — have been killed and more than 300 wounded, most of them Palestinians.

Mohammed Dahlan, chief of Yasser Arafat's preventative security forces in Gaza called the remarks "unnecessary", adding that, although the Israel Defence Force could re-enter any Palestinian city, "there is no guarantee that it could get out easily".

□ Body found: Israeli troops in the West Bank yesterday found the body of Sharon Edri, 19 — a soldier missing since September — in Sourif, the home village of the Muslim suicide bomber who blew up a Tel Aviv café last month. (Reuters)



Mordechai: "Not difficult to recapture Hebron"

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Rebels give Mobutu three days to resign

Ultimatum rules out exile for President

By SAM KILEY, AFRICA CORRESPONDENT

THE rebel leader, Laurent Kabila, ordered a pause in his advance across Zaire yesterday and gave President Mobutu Sese Seko three days to step down before he orders his fighters to march on the capital, Kinshasa.

Rebel radio said that there was no need for Mr Mobutu, 66, to go into exile and suggested that he could live out his remaining days in his home town of Gbadolite.

In Goma, Mr Kabila, 56, said in the palace which had once belonged to Mr Mobutu that "if in three days we will not get good news from Kinshasa on the availability of Mr Mobutu's willingness to depart to the north, then we will be forced to continue the military advance on all the regions in which the authority remains".

Mr Mobutu, who has prostate cancer, is anxious that he should not die abroad, family members have said. In insisting that there is no need for the President to leave the country, the rebels appeared to have acknowledged Mr Mobutu's deeply superstitious nature. But Mr Kabila said the full in fighting would not go on for long.

"I hope something major will happen within three days' time... We want him to contact us to negotiate his departure... He can call me on the telephone," the rebel leader said.

Mr Kabila, wearing a white

shirt with a black pin stripe and black trousers, said he welcomed Wednesday's White House statement urging Mr Mobutu to make way for a transitional government.

"I think they are right by saying it now. Everybody knows that this is the time for Mr Mobutu to get out of power," he said.

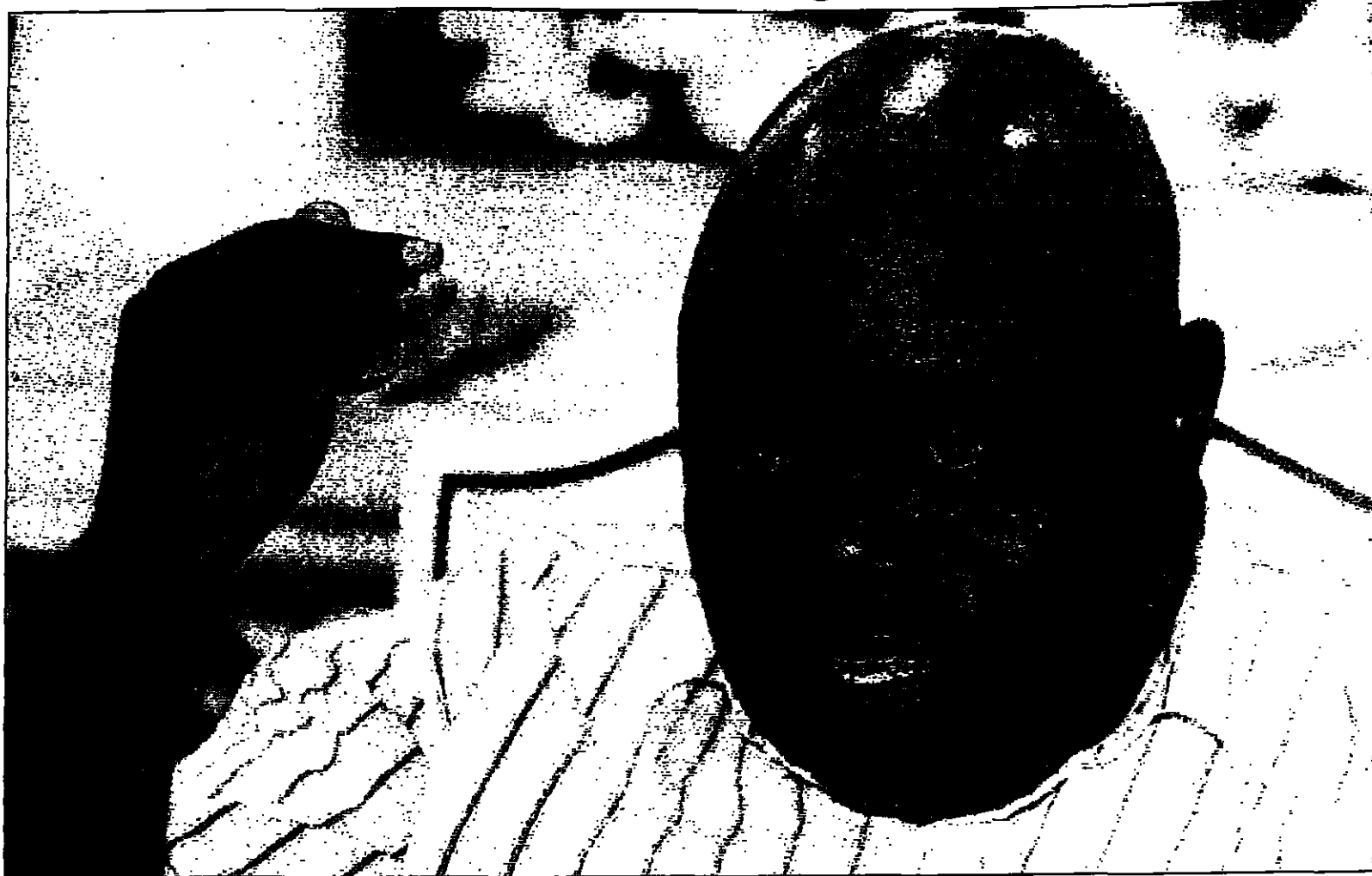
The ultimatum came amid newly restored calm in Kinshasa after a day that saw troops firing teargas on opposition supporters. Mr Kabila's Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire continued to fight with pockets of government soldiers on the outskirts of the second city, Lubumbashi, but insisted it was in control.

Locals said that gangs of youths who had raided abandoned government barracks as the soldiers ran from the rebels were cruising around the city in stolen vehicles filled with looted goods.

The rebels have been quick to impose military order on other cities they have taken in their seven-month campaign, in which they have stormed across the country almost unopposed.

Yesterday was probably the last day of what Zaireans call "affirmative shopping" and most residents of Lubumbashi were confident the rebels would soon restore order.

Curious onlookers watched as others looted Mr Mobutu's presidential palace in Lubum-



Laurent Kabila, Zaire's rebel leader, at a news conference in Goma. He urged President Mobutu to contact him while fighting was suspended

bashi and made off with kitchen household fittings as well as small arms abandoned by fleeing troops.

Young, well-dressed and strictly disciplined fighters now in charge of the city said that they had met with unexpected stiff resistance from the President's Special Divi-

sion in a battle around Mount Simba to the south of Lubumbashi and that there had been heavy casualties on both sides.

A Belgian man was wounded in a shell blast near the golf course and his friends were trying to organise his evacuation by air to Kinshasa. The Lubumbashi-based

Governor of Shaba province, Kyungu ku Mwanza, who was recently appointed by Mr Mobutu, left the Governor's office on Wednesday afternoon with a white flag and is assumed to have surrendered to the rebels.

One colonel in the presidential division who refused to

surrender was killed, witnesses said.

Government forces who abandoned Kisangani in the east and Mbuji-Mayi in the south, have now retreated under pressure from the rebels to Kikwit, about 200 miles from Kinshasa.

"We expect a lull for the next

couple of days while people digest all the recent news," a European ambassador in the capital said yesterday. "Knowledge that the rebels are closing in is bound to raise tensions here."

"Everyone's main worry is how the army will behave," the envoy added.

Delhi coalition faces deadline

FROM CHRISTOPHER THOMAS IN DELHI

THE Indian Government has been given a deadline of 11am today to get rid of its Prime Minister or face certain defeat in parliament. Talks to save the ten-month-old administration broke down last night.

The Congress party, which withdrew support from the Government last week, has ordered its MPs to vote against the ruling United Front coalition. H.D. Deve Gowda, the Prime Minister, has refused to stand down, the principal demand for saving

the Government. The brinkmanship threatens to throw the country into a general election that no party wants — especially not the Congress, which knows it would suffer greater humiliation than in last summer's poll, when it was virtually eliminated in the north of the country.

It is seeking to lead a new coalition led by Sitaram Kesri, the party president, who accuses Mr Gowda of ordering police to launch corruption investigations into senior Congress politicians as part of a personal vendetta.

Congress and the Govern-

ment started negotiations on Wednesday, giving little time to resolve the crisis before the confidence vote. Congress supported the Government in parliament without being part of it, and has been awaiting an opportunity to manoeuvre itself into a dominant position and instal its own Prime Minister.

Mr Kesri's move, which has upset senior party figures, was ill-timed and evidently not well thought out. If the Government is toppled, it will be difficult for any party to gather enough support to lead a new coalition.

White Ensign is lowered in Far East

FROM CATHERINE FIELD IN HONG KONG

THE FLAG of the Royal Navy will come down for the last time on the China Station today in a ceremony to mark the decommissioning of Britain's last military base in the Far East.

The base of the navy's Hong Kong squadron on Stonecutters Island is to be taken out of service 81 days before the colony reverts to China. A Royal Marines Band will play *Sunset* as the White Ensign is lowered. "It will be a very sad event," said

the First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Jock Slater.

The Royal Navy has been in Hong Kong since 1841, when British troops planted the Union Jack at Possession Mount during the first Opium War with China.

The base is being decommissioned exactly a century after *HMS Tamar*, a wooden 16-gun sloop, arrived here on April 11, 1897, to be used as a naval accommodation vessel. *Tamar* was scuttled in Hong Kong harbour on December 12, 1941, a day after the Royal Navy withdrew from Stonecutters to Hong Kong Island

as Japanese forces pounded the dockyard.

The navy will also be honouring *Jenny Side Party*, 78, whose women clean, paint and polish in return for "aristings" — old wire, rope, canvas, paint and galley swill. Jenny, whose real name is Ng Muk-kam, was nine when she began helping her mother, also a side party girl.

The first boat I ever worked on was *HMS Berwick* when it came in 1928," said Jenny, who was awarded the British Empire Medal in 1980.

Letters, page 21



Jenny: has worked on ships since 1928

Killer sues Zimbabwe ex-leader

Harare: The Rev Canaan Banana, 61, Zimbabwe's first President, is being sued for more than £70,000 by a policeman to compensate him for an alleged three-year ordeal of homosexual abuse (Jan Raath writes).

Byron Howe, counsel for Jeffrey Dube, 35, a former inspector, said yesterday he had filed papers in the High Court for pain and suffering endured while Dube was Mr Banana's aide-de-camp between 1983 and 1986. Dube, 35, is in jail for shooting dead a constable over a "gay" jibe.

Korea shooting

Panmunjom: Troops from North and South Korea exchanged warning shots across the tense demilitarised zone here. The shooting came shortly before a visit by William Cohen, the US Defence Secretary. He said the incident showed "it is still a very tense, dangerous, unstable situation as far as the North Koreans are concerned". (AFP)

Nigerian decree

Lagos: General Sani Abacha, Nigeria's military ruler, has decreed that he has absolute power over recently elected local governments, including the right to dismiss council leaders. (Reuters)

Arrest order

Quito: Ecuador's Supreme Court ordered the arrest of the former President, Abdala Bucaram, suspected of misuse of presidential funds. He was deposed in February and is in exile in Panama. (Reuters)

Songwriter dies

Hendersonville, Tennessee: Mae Boren Axton, 82, co-writer of *Heartbreak Hotel*, the hit that catapulted Elvis Presley to stardom in 1956, was found dead on Wednesday at her home. (Reuters)

Holy orders

Baghdad: President Saddam Hussein, who is 60 on April 28, has ordered a new mosque to be built and another to be restored each year to mark his birthday. Baghdad radio reported. (AFP)

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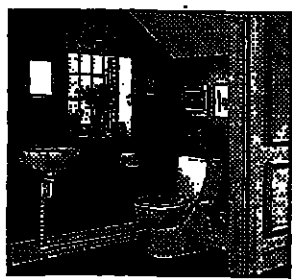
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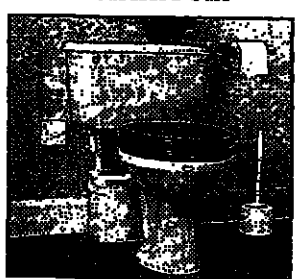
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ELECTION 97

POLL DAY
-20

'I'd love to see Gemma Goldsmith canvassing in our housing estates'

David Mellor in Putney

Ben Macintyre - page 15

Peter Riddell - page 12

'Labour has only itself to blame for the wobbles in its campaign'

'Jimmy Young gets T.B.'

Peter Barnard on Tony Blair's radio interview

page 15

Desperately seeking Sir George

Sir George Young went to Yorkshire to extol public transport, but The Times's Damian Whitworth went one better and actually tried it out. Michael Powell took the photographs

MY MISSION was simple. Follow the Transport Secretary, Sir George Young, as he travelled Yorkshire looking at the successful results of government policy. There was only one catch. While the minister travelled in an air-conditioned car, I would test the public transport system and keep up as best I could.

8.45pm Wednesday: Phone-call from the newsdesk. I know that something is up when the caller is barely able to contain his mirth as he starts the briefing.

8.45am Thursday: I step out from my hotel in glorious sunshine. Perhaps this won't be so bad after all.

8.50: Nobody in the information office at Leeds City station has ever heard of the first stop, *Cobra Rail Freight*. After many frantic phone calls it emerges that it is in Wakefield. 9.34: I take the train from Leeds to Wakefield. I am slightly concerned when I look up from my newspaper and I see that the train has stopped in *Castleford*. I came to *Castleford* on Monday and even as a Londoner know that it is not between Leeds and Wakefield on the map. We stop there for a while. Then we



Hot pursuit: Sir George Young's visit to Wakefield station was the start of an odyssey for Damian Whitworth, a Londoner, as he consulted maps and timetables to follow the minister's progress across unfamiliar terrain

edge slowly backwards out of the station. 10.00am: Arrive in Wakefield. 10.05: After a short walk catch up with Sir George who is hopping on and off trains at the depot. "Part of my transport policy is to move more business off the roads and on to the railways," he says as he moves off towards his chauffeur-driven car. I explain my mission for the day to him. "Is that to try and show up the inadequacies of public transport?" he asks suspiciously. I offer him the chance to accom-

pany me on this little odyssey. "I take public transport whenever possible," he says emphatically before mumbling something about the need for a car when travelling from a Hampshire constituency to the North. 10.53am: I trundle back on the train to Wakefield. The lane opposite two elderly chaps who communicate in a language which seems to consist only of whistles. 11.34: The train gets into Leeds two minutes before my bus to

Aberford. I rush into City Square but needn't have worried as the bus is late. Even if it had been on time, I am due to reach Aberford 45 minutes after Sir George arrived and ten minutes before he leaves. 12.10: After winding through the sprawl of east Leeds it is a relief to arrive in the pretty village of Aberford. The lane where Sir George is making a house visit is easy to find. 12.20: It is a very long lane. And uphill. Eventually, perspiring heavily, I reach the top of an endless drive and emerge on to the lawn of a

grand house where local Tory party members and parish councillors are sipping coffee. Sir George clearly believed he had seen the last of me and looks rather surprised. The party workers smile politely but clearly think I am raving mad, perhaps dangerous. The owner of the house, a florid-faced chap fetches me a glass of orange squash. I feel about ten years old. But Sir George is very friendly and he and the local MP, Spencer Batiste, points to the horizon where the new A1/M1 link road is being

built and enthuse about how it is not going to spoil the countryside because it has been carefully sited.

Sir George's sniffy assistant, Lucy, is very reluctant to tell me the rest of the day's itinerary. I have only the vaguest idea where they are going next.

1.20pm: Alone at bus stop. Decide to cross road to The Swan for refreshment. But I know that the iron lore of buses is that they always come when you pop in for a quick one.

1.21: Pop over for a quick one.

1.22: Bus comes. Sight it in time and clamber aboard.

Time-wise, things are beginning to unravel. I make a tactical decision to strap the next stop and head for the final engagement in Halifax.

2.05: Back in Leeds.

2.18: Leap on the train to Halifax via Bradford.

3pm: Arrive in Halifax knowing only that Sir George will be somewhere in a suburb called Salter Hebble for 30 minutes.

3.10: Newsagent tells me I am going in completely the wrong direction. There is only one solution.

3.15: £12 poorer, I emerge from Cycle Gear with a hired mountain bike. I set off at about two miles per hour wobbling in front of juggernauts.

3.30: Gotcha! Catch up with Sir George who is examining a road junction at the bottom of a hair-raising incline.

"Well done," says Sir George. "But that isn't public transport you know." He offers me a lift back in his Rover. Looking up the terrifying road I have just come down, I want to accept but proudly I decline and weave back to the station.



Last rendezvous, with our man now on two wheels



Blue is the colour: Mr Blair's choice of campaign neckwear has allowed only one appearance for old Labour red

Blair's ties get election blues

Psychologists say Labour is getting it in the neck, writes Jeremy Laurance

TONY Blair has abandoned the trademark red ties that led Labour through the last two elections. The Labour leader's switch to blue — on 14 of his past 15 public appearances — is a marked change from the Neil Kinnock years when red was de rigueur for senior party figures.

Psychologists, image consultants and public relations advisers agreed yesterday that Tony Blair's choice of campaign ties says more about him and Labour's policies than a stack of manifestos.

The dominance of blue in the Blair wardrobe has drawn gibes that the Labour leader has stolen the Tory's clothes as well as their ideas. On each of the major set-piece occasions in the campaign to date, a predominantly blue tie has hung from the Blair neck.

On March 17, the day the election was called, it was blue and white squares with small red diamonds — a favourite tie that has had two further outings since. On March 31, the Labour campaign launch, it was blue with red diamonds.

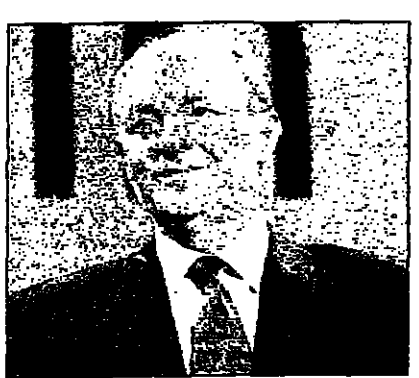
Three days later Mr Blair selected blue with yellow spots for the launch of Labour's manifesto. On April 6, taking his family to church in Islington he went tieless — but wore a blue shirt.

The following day, addressing a busi-

ness audience in the city, it was plain blue, the same tie he displayed to David Dimbleby on *Panorama* that night.

The only exception to the blue-with-nothing rule was the red tie with white spots he wore while campaigning in Staffordshire on April 4.

Angela Wright, a colour psychologist who runs a consultancy in London, said Mr Blair was indicating his preference for reason over passion. "Blue is the colour of efficiency and sophistication but it is rather unemotional. He is telling



In the red: Neil Kinnock

us that he is sensible and business-like and not fiery and emotional."

Dr Halla Beloff, a social psychologist in Edinburgh, welcomed the Labour leader's break with party convention. "The uniform of the parties is rather cheap and vulgar. I think women thought it was a bit silly the way Mrs Thatcher always wore blue."

Francis Halliwell, a director of the Quentin Bell Organisation, said Mr Blair was demonstrating sartorially his party's shift from Left to Right. "He has pinched the Tories' policies and now he is pinching their colours as well."

Mary Spillane, of the image consultants Colour Me Beautiful, said blue was more appropriate than red for a prospective prime minister. "Blue conveys authority. It looks more business-like and statesman-like. Red conveys dynamism but a wholly red tie can come across as arrogant. If you wear red it has to be broken up with a pattern."

A pattern was necessary to show personality and indicate that the wearer knew what year it was, something that eludes British politicians, according to Ms Spillane. "They wear these brand-new ties that no one else is wearing. I don't know where they get them."

COLOUR CHARTS PARTY'S SHIFT TO THE RIGHT

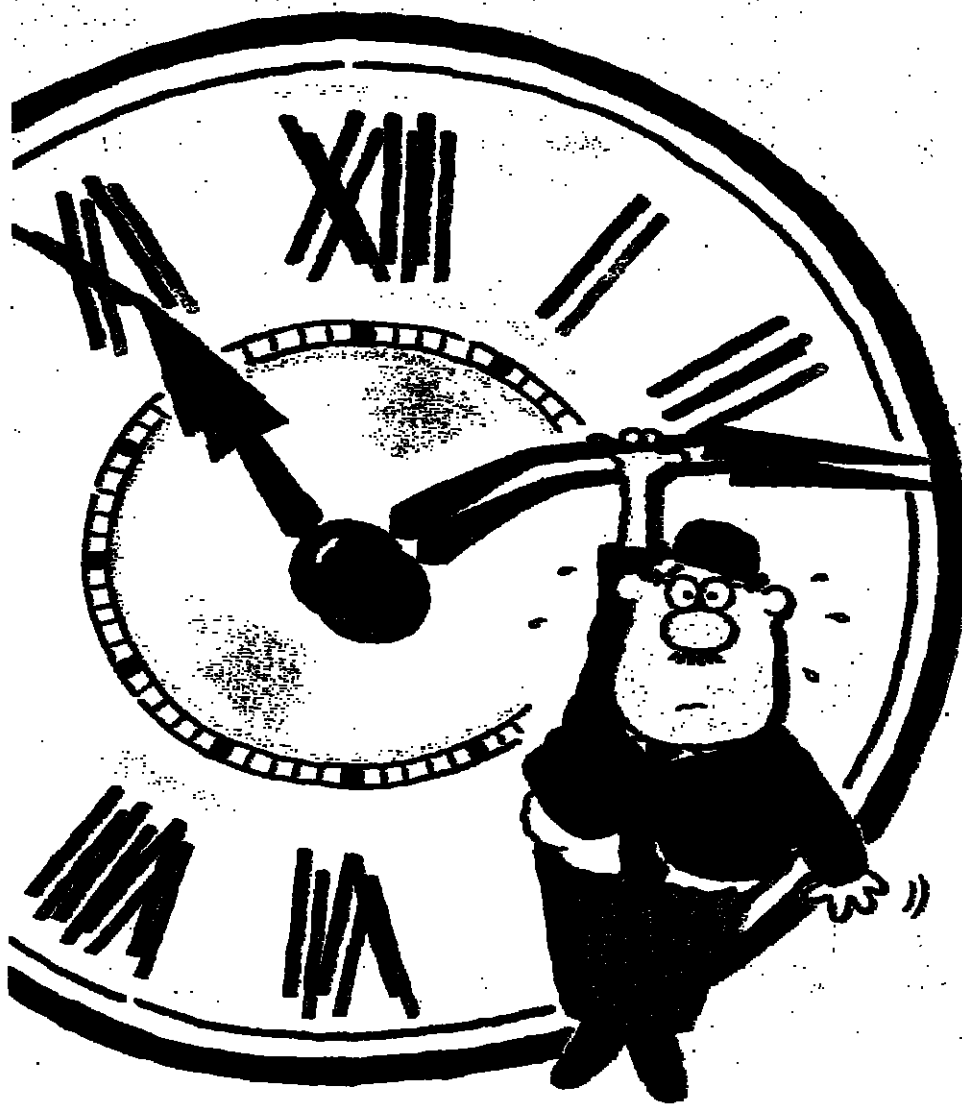
17 March: Blue and white squares, small red diamonds. John Major calls the election.
20 March: Blue, with white diamonds. Visit to Hanton Primary School, south London following London press conference on technology in schools.
26 March: Blue and white squares, small red diamonds (as 17th March). London press conference.
27 March: Blue, white spots.

Memorial service for Matthew Harding, deputy chairman of Chelsea football club. 28-30 March: No engagements.
31 March: Blue, red diamonds. Launch of Labour Party campaign with slogan "Britain deserves better".
1 April: Red and blue squares. Launch of Labour's Battle Bus, tour of East Midlands, rally in Derby.
2 April: Blue, gold blobs. Preparing speech for next

day's launch of the manifesto.
3 April: Blue, yellow spots. Launch of Labour manifesto in London, visits to Scotland and West Midlands.
4 April: Red, white spots. Campaigning in Staffordshire.
5 April: Red, blue and white rings. Formally adopted as Labour candidate for Sedgfield constituency.
6 April: No tie, at church in blue shirt.

7 April: Plain blue. Addressing business audience in the city.
8 April: Blue, yellow and white spots. Question and answer session in Basildon.
9 April: Blue, white shapes. Campaigning in Exeter, attends cabaret evening in Plymouth.
10 April: Blue and white squares, small red diamonds (as 17 and 26 March). In Redditch and Warwick after press conference in London.

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Revenue
Self Assessment — a clearer tax system

Howard hits out at Labour over strike threat by firemen

By MICHAEL HORSNELL

TROOPS are on standby to provide emergency fire cover if a strike by firemen is agreed today. The action was seized on by the Home Secretary as evidence of the union militancy to come under a prospective Labour government.

A fleet of elderly Green Goddess fire engines arrived yesterday at the garrison town of Colchester in Essex where 300 men from 24 Airmobile Brigade prepared to take over from the county's fire service if the strike went ahead. The 25 engines will be deployed at 14 towns in Essex if a ballot by the Fire Brigades Union (FBU), to be declared today, supports a strike. The industrial action is being taken because Essex County Council, controlled by Labour and the Liberal Democrats, has cut the fire service budget by £1.5 million.

Michael Howard said: "Forget the rhetoric of new Labour, witness the actions of real Labour in local government. I

hope, for the sake of the people of Essex, that common sense will prevail and they will decide not to strike. Of course, this is a matter between the Labour-affiliated FBU and the Labour and Liberal controlled county council. It's for the council to determine spending priorities. Once more, we are seeing an example of industrial unrest, a hallmark of real Labour in government."

Bernard Jenkin, Tory candidate for Essex North, said: "This is what a Labour government would be like, with bust-ups between Labour ministers and their union paymasters. The 'green' threat to public safety is a union affiliated to Labour, organising a strike at Colchester."

Firefighters say the cuts threaten the future of three fire stations in the Southend-on-Sea area and undermine safety, pay and conditions.

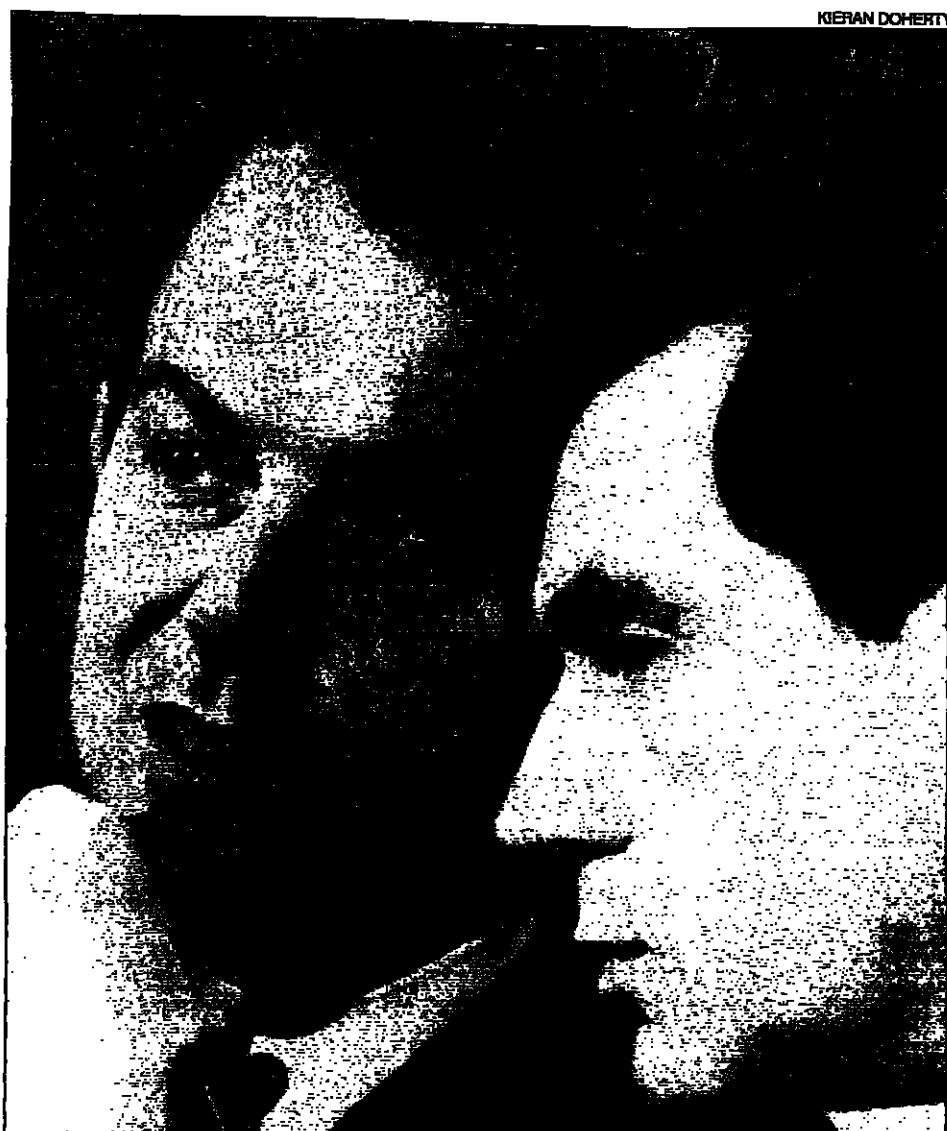
But the county council blames the reduction on government cuts, amid counter-

claims by Tory councillors of budget mismanagement.

The council said there would be no redundancies or station closures as a result of the cut, but, under the obligatory three-year review by the Chief Fire Officer into the level of fire cover, reductions remained a possibility. A council spokesman said: "The £1.5 million cut has been imposed because the county council had to make a £22 million cut in overall services. But they have worked very hard to limit cuts to the fire service."

An army spokesman said the troops were experienced firefighters but would undergo training at Watnisham, the Suffolk air base.

A spokesman for the fire brigade said: "The timing is not of our making. No time is a good time for firefighters to withdraw services and put the public at risk." But the public, he added, could be put permanently at risk if fire services were contracted out.



Tony Blair and Gordon Brown at Labour's morning press conference yesterday

Leninist-style Blair-Brown axis puts party in policy spin

Labour has only itself to blame for the wobbles in its campaign and the Tory pick-up in yesterday's MORI poll in *The Times*. The root cause is not events over the past ten days but the style of policymaking over the past three years. Tony Blair, Gordon Brown and their small group of allies have constituted a Leninist vanguard, operating by coup rather than consensus and fait accompli rather than debate.

The typical pattern has been for Mr Brown (and it is almost always him) to make a speech which is cleared perfunctorily with Shadow Cabinet colleagues, at times just the night before by telephone. His staff give advance briefings about the Shadow Chancellor's intentions, giving an impression which sometimes goes beyond what Mr Brown's later speech says. But the initiative is firmly established, and becomes policy. This has happened with Mr Brown's main proposals on public spending and taxes, most recently when he announced that Labour would not raise the top, as well as the basic, rate of income tax.

Occasionally, the process has come unstuck as when Mr Brown got into trouble over his plan, fudged in the election manifesto, to reallocate the money paid in child benefit for 16 to 18-year-olds. Similarly, the floating by Mr Brown's staff of the rather sensible idea of privatising the Tote was immediately repudiated by Robin Cook, producing a stalemate.

However, Mr Blair and Mr Brown have only been able to change Labour and its policies as much as they have by circumventing an often conservative group of spokesmen and MPs, and then seeking blanket endorsement from party members in a ballot. Allowing time for lengthy discussion would have risked building up opposition.

But there are risks in policymaking by bounce and briefing. Not everyone is signed up to a policy, or even aware of a shift. The very centralised nature of decision-making produces embarrassing slips, as over privatisation and the future of the air-traffic control system. There have been tensions between some of Mr Blair and Mr Brown's advisers, though not between the two men themselves, as in the contrasting versions of how much could be raised from the windfall levy on the utilities.

The appearance has been given of policymaking on the hoof, which has damaged Labour and given the Tories the chance to counter-attack. This raises questions about how Labour would make policy in government where initiatives cannot be launched by nudge and wink and have to be agreed collectively.



PETER RIDDELL

The confusion also reflects the dilemma posed for Labour strategy of seeking election on a platform of fiscal prudence. The approach means the argument is defined in Tory terms, and therefore makes Labour vulnerable to the picking apart of its figures and the discovery of alleged "black holes". It also makes it harder for Labour to campaign convincingly on improving health and education when its specific pledges for change are so marginal and it is accepting the present Government's spending totals for the next two years.

Labour leaders should consider the message of the MORI poll. There is no reason for them to panic. Labour's lead is still unprecedentedly large for this stage of the campaign. But the Tories have started to climb out of their narrow range of the past 18 months and the campaign is becoming more fluid with more people saying they may change their mind. The Labour campaign has so far been cautious and vague. But the party needs to make a stronger positive case about how it would really make a difference in office.

The party's main distinctive economic proposal — as opposed to its plans for constitutional change — is the use of the windfall levy on the utilities for measures to cut youth unemployment by 250,000. There are holes here, too, as the Tories pointed out yesterday. Mr Blair has shown a pretty sure touch in the campaign so far. But he needs to start taking some risks. The election is not just about "time for a change". We need to be told more about what the change involves.

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Labour turns new page in campaign

For the first time the party is advertising in weekly women's magazines to woo Britain's 'marginalised' voters, **Andrew Pierce** writes

TONY BLAIR is courting the female vote aided by soap-opera stars with the first big political advertising campaign in women's magazines. More than £120,000 is being spent by the Labour Party on double-page advertorials in best-selling magazines such as *Woman*, *Woman's Own*, and *Take a Break*. They will appear in the week before polling day on May 1. The venture is a new development in political campaigning. The Labour Party spread in *Woman*, the grand old lady of the industry, is the first political advertisement in the publication in its 60-year history. *Woman* and *Woman's Own*, the more traditional weekly products, are aimed at the "thirty-something" middle-class mother. They sell 338,000 and 808,000 copies respectively.

Labour strategists have also targeted relative newcomers in the field such as *Take a Break*. The magazine, part of the Bauer group, is the market leader and has a weekly circulation of 1.3 million. The party is also advertising in *thats life!*, the most popular read for young mothers; it has a circulation of 483,000.

Richard Wilson, star of the comedy *One Foot in the Grave*, Michelle Collins and Ross Kemp from *EastEnders*, and *Coronation Street* performers have lent their names to the campaigns under the headline:

"What the stars are saying about Labour". Glenda Jackson, the Oscar-winning star turned politician, has completed a question and answer session for the magazines. Dr Miriam Stoppard writes an agony aunt column for readers with political problems.

Mick Hucknall, the singer from the Simply Red pop group, is also quoted as saying: "My father told me again and again as a child that under the Tories the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. I still think it's true. If you want to make a change you have to vote Labour." Michelle Collins, Cindy of *EastEnders*, says: "I think Labour will do much more than the Tories to improve women's healthcare. For instance, new Labour will speed up diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer."

The advertorials include a copy of a poster of Tony Blair alongside the words: Labour's five-year pledge of no increase in income tax rates. There is a signed letter from Mr Blair addressed to "the children" of Britain.

Mr Blair, referring to his own three young children, talks about his commitment to schools and reducing class sizes. "As a dad, I want the best for my children, just like your mums and dads want for you."

Phone numbers are included for details on how to join the party and for clarification on party policy.



Actor Richard Wilson and singer Mick Hucknall are among the stars backing Labour

The paid-for advertising campaign is part of the increasing battle to win the women's vote as Worcester's *Woman* has displaced *Essex Man* as the symbolic target of this general election.

Some research has revealed that John Major is more popular with women than Tony Blair. The Labour leader flattened his bouffant hairstyle and smiled less on the advice of some of his women MPs.

IPC magazines made the initial approach to BMP, Labour's advertising agency, and MC Saatchi, which handles the Conservative Party account. Labour endorsed the package but the Conservatives decided not to proceed.

The strategic switch in advertising comes after a survey by the Equal Opportunities Commission showed that 83 per cent of women feel marginalised by the main parties.

Simon Hills, the agency sales

director for *Woman* and *Woman's Own*, said: "There has been a gender gap. In the past, political parties have used television and newspapers in election campaigns but tended to forget women. The economy is not necessarily the most important issue for women. It's about children and classroom sizes. Women have a trusting relationship with their magazines. Women believe what they read in them, which is where the power of the message comes across."

« Tony Blair n'est pas notre tasse de thé »

Not to French taste: Labour Party-style socialism

Blair too Right for French Left

FROM ADAM SAGE IN PARIS

TONY BLAIR was denounced by a leading French socialist yesterday after winning praise from the Right.

Jean-Luc Mélenchon, a left-wing Socialist senator, said in an interview: "Tony Blair is not our cup of tea. He says he believes in workplace flexibility. I fear that the sight of this kind of 'socialism' will not improve our image on the Continent."

His attack on Mr Blair follows attempts by the Gaullist-led government to compare Labour's manifesto with what it says are the "archaic" policies of the French opposition. Lionel Jospin, the French Socialist Party leader, says he will increase wages, cut the working week to 35 hours and create 700,000 public and private-sector jobs for young people if he wins next year's legislative elections.

Pointing to the gulf between M. Jospin's "unrealistic promises" and the prudence of "le bon socialisme anglais", the Right says French socialists are

out of step with the modern world.

The editor of the Gaullist-supporting newspaper *Le Figaro*, Franz-Olivier Giesbert, said in a recent editorial: "We must urgently get the French Socialists to read Mr Blair's programme so that they store away their magic cure-alls and their magic wands for creating 700,000 jobs."

Such comparisons have served to infuriate France's Socialist Party at a time when its popularity is falling in the opinion polls. In *L'Événement du Jeudi*, M. Mélenchon gave full vent to the anger that the Labour Party has provoked.

"Tony Blair represents a variant of socialism acceptable to the French Right," said the leader of the French Socialist Party's left-wing tendency. "If Tony Blair took up a quarter of Lionel Jospin's programme, he would look like a dangerous leftist in the eyes of the City. With an English-style socialism in France... the National Front would have a clear road ahead of it."

Jimmy Young catches TB in studio attack

Those who compile the weekly programme information which the BBC sends to journalists relieve the tedium by having a little fun with headlines, so a note about yesterday's Radio 2 interview between Jimmy Young and Tony Blair was accompanied by the startling announcement: JY gets TB.

Young has been around for so long that he not only remembers old Labour, he has paid income tax to it. He has interviewed every Prime Minister since, and including, Harold Wilson in 1964. Young's official age is 72, but his real age may be a state secret. *Who's Who* gives the birthdate of Leslie Ronald Young as "21 Sept" but a year is not forthcoming.

There are those who regard Young, a former crooner and disc-jockey, as a soft touch, but few of them have been interviewed by him. He is well briefed and has an allergy to flannel, which he interrupts with Paxmanite regularity.

His best moment with Mr



PETER BARNARD

Blair was when he produced the letter written on March 21 by the organisation representing air traffic controllers, saying that the Shadow Transport team had said that Labour "will not privatise the Air Traffic Control System". This was some four weeks after Margaret Beckett said Labour would have to review whether to proceed with its sale. Blair seemed to get off the

hook by saying that no one in the transport team had given this assurance. Young asked him who had. Mr Blair said he did not know who had. So Young said: "If you don't know who it is, how do you it is not a member of the transport team?"

This was a classic Youngism, in that it bluntly mirrored the reaction of his listeners, of whom there are 1.5 million every day. Many of these people, middle-of-the-road listeners to a middle-of-the-road radio station, will be decisive at this election.

Young knows that audience: he speaks for them, to the extent that anyone can. They take a simple view and are suspicious of politicians who offer complex, albeit tenable, answers as to why what they thought last week, or last year or a decade ago is not what they think now.

Why, Young asked, was Mr Blair in favour of privatisation now when in 1987 he had called the Tory privatisations "the closest thing postwar to political corruption"? Mr Blair said that it was the way the Tories had sold utilities and the low prices asked that he condemned.

But the Labour leader needs to take care. Young is only the latest interviewer to suggest that Mr Blair is hurriedly climbing into Tory clothes to garner votes and this line of questioning has a drip-drip effect as surely as sleaze wears away the Tory underoil.

The one thing we did not discover yesterday, an omission many of Young's loyal listeners will not easily forgive, is whether Mr Blair wears his shirt inside or outside his underpants.

It was on Young's programme in March 1994 that John Major revealed that his shirts were tucked inside, something which told the nation more about their Prime Minister than a thousand manifestos.

Mr Blair's interview with Young only lasted just over 25 minutes, so there may not have been time for a full exposition of his policies in this area over the years. The matter, quite rightly, remained privatised.

Casualty of slogan war

LABOUR'S "Britain Deserves Better" campaign has struck a chord with voters and shown a tangible difference between them and the Tories, a poll disclosed today.

The slogan has captured the imagination and support of 84 per cent of 1,000 people interviewed nationally. By contrast, just 8 per cent identified with the Conservative alternative, "Britain is Booming". A majority said they thought the Tories were solely interested in their opponents, rather than the electorate's concerns.

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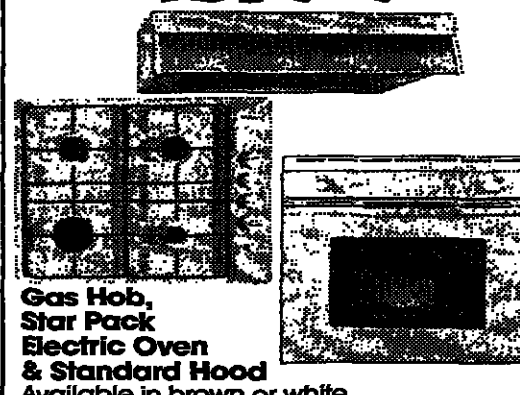
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Labour shows zero tolerance for Major's stance on crime

BY PHILIP WEBSTER
RICHARD FORD AND
PAUL WILKINSON

LABOUR accused John Major of being soft on crime last night after he appeared to rule out the controversial "zero tolerance" policy for one-off offenders.

Jack Straw, the Shadow Home Secretary, said that the Tories were "hopelessly split" after Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, took a notably tougher approach than the Prime Minister and said that he favoured zero tolerance.

Tony Blair made plain his support for zero tolerance on the day that Charles Pollard, Chief Constable of Thames Valley, criticised the policy, which was pioneered in New York. Mr Pollard said that "significant dangers" lurked beyond it.

The Tory manifesto does not use the phrase "zero tolerance" but clearly backs the concept. It says that the police are rightly vigorously tackling problems such as graffiti, vandalism and drunkenness, and adds: "Where such behaviour goes unchecked more serious crimes will follow."

When Mr Major was asked about his attitude at his morn-

ing press conference he said that some police chiefs favoured zero tolerance of serious criminals and had targeted their policing to deal with a particular sort of crime damaging to their area.

But he went on: "I do not think that talking of zero tolerance of people who are one-off offenders, many of whom may be inadequate in some way, is the right way to deal with them. I think where you are talking of the professional criminal classes I think it is right to be tough but whether you use the term zero tolerance is a matter of taste."

Mr Blair said he had an "absolutely clear view". He said: "If you refuse to tolerate small crimes then you can

create a different climate within local communities. If you go to local communities where there are serious crime problems the first thing you see is vandalism, graffiti and old people being put upon. If you do not tolerate those things you then set a standard for your attitude towards crime throughout the whole community. I am passionate about this — because otherwise you are admitting there is a level of crime you are prepared to disregard."

Later both Mr Howard and Mr Straw backed the concept of zero tolerance and Mr Straw visited Middlesbrough to meet Ray Mallon, a detective inspector, implementing a pro-active drive against criminals.

Mr Mallon, who has promised to resign if he does not cut crime by a fifth over 18 months, said: "We are targeting a minority, they are called criminals. We will continue to target them. This is what the public and government wants. The public is fed up with wishy-washy policing methods."

"Academics have knocked our approach but I say they are wrong. I am tired of having to justify why Cleveland has been successful in reducing crime. When a football team wins matches, they do not have to justify why."

Mr Howard told BBC Radio 4's *World at One*: "I believe in zero tolerance of crime. I believe in taking the fight

against crime to the criminals. That is what the police are increasingly doing in different ways in different areas, according to local circumstances. Of course it is important to bring your local community with you to build a real partnership — I have always placed great emphasis on that."

Mr Straw rejected the suggestion that zero tolerance could cause more problems than it solved. "I don't believe that's the case, especially if it is zero tolerance with a British face."

Mr Straw said later Mr Major and Mr Howard could not agree on how disorder should be tackled. "I am astonished that John Major does not realise the misery which disorder, vandalism, public drunkenness and harassment wreak on people's lives. Mr Major's attitude explains why crime has doubled over the last 18 years and why incident of disorder have increased dramatically."

The Tories accused Labour of mischief making, saying there was no difference between Mr Howard and Mr Major. They were both talking about being tough on criminals.

Ruthless approach 'leads to riots'

BY RICHARD FORD
HOME CORRESPONDENT

THE concept of "zero tolerance" is based on a theory that if minor disorder such as begging, vandalism, litter and drunkenness continue unchecked they produce a community where serious crime flourishes.

It involves moving people,

including graffiti artists, beggars and drunks from the streets.

In New York, the strategy has been hailed as the reason for a 37 per cent drop in street crime over three years. Others have argued that the decline is also due to shifts in the demographic structure of the city with a decline in the number of young men.

Charles Pollard, Chief Constable of Thames Valley Police, writes in a book to be published next week that the emotion underlying the strategy is based on aggression: on ruthlessness in dealing with low level criminality and disorderliness. He said yesterday it could lead to victimisation and trigger rioting as occurred in Brixton in 1981.



Looking sheepish: Liberal Democrats leader Paddy Ashdown bleats at a ewe on a farm near Edinburgh to persuade her the new-born lambs are safe with him

Rich find friendly habitat in Labour

TV WATCH

NICHOLAS
WAPSHOTT

IT SEEMS an unlikely piece of Labour propaganda. In its election broadcast last night, Anita Roddick, queen bee of the environmentally friendly toilet-products chain, declared, of Tony Blair: "I like the way he looks exhausted."

So maybe Blair is cracking up after all, just like Michael Heseltine keeps telling us.

But she went on to say: "I like the way he is working. And finally a politician that is not arrogant. Labour is definitely a party that business can do business with."

Which was the point of the exercise. Labour persuaded three successful business personalities and a former Bank of England adviser to declare that the business world can happily work with a Labour government. Ms Roddick was joined by Geoffrey Robinson, the boss of Granada, and Terence Conran, head of Habitat and fashionable restaurateur, and they took it in turns to endorse the new Labour boast that many entrepreneurs now look forward to working with Labour.

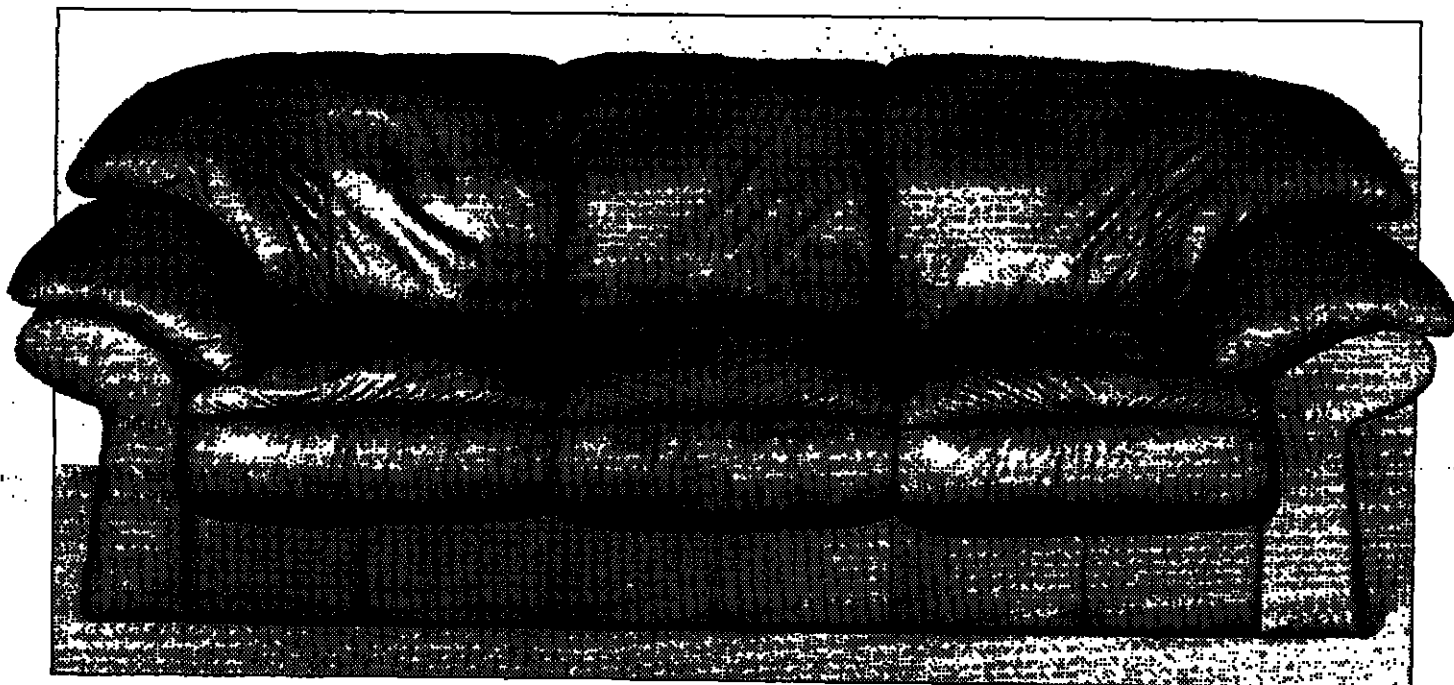
And what a change it made from the night before, when the Tories paraded actors posing as working people disillusioned after living under Labour. Labour, meanwhile, are showing off their

super-rich, just like an American Express commercial. Mr Robinson, speaking from his gilt drawing room, confessed that he had been "a Conservative voter ever since I was allowed to vote", but came out with this endorsement: "I think, frankly, there is only one party that can represent Britain best, getting business right and that's new Labour."

Mr Conran, who has appeared in an Amex ad, sat behind a desk you could play tennis on, and finally got round to the matter in hand: "John Major is not strong enough to keep that Cabinet together and I do think that Tony Blair will be strong enough. I am impressed by his dynamism."

But whether or not you believe the message, it is at least a confident one. By contrast, the Tory effort was paranoid, negative and apocalyptic. As many voters feel uneasy at seeing one party slag off another, just as they recoil from knocking copy in detergent ads, the difference in tactics may prove critical.

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Andrew Pierce investigates the invisible men (and women) of the campaign

Party managers have undesirables kept off camera

MICHAEL HOWARD, Clare Short and Douglas Hogg have emerged as the politicians most conspicuous by their absence from the limelight of the election campaign.

Virginia Bottomley and Frank Dobson, both expected to be demoted from their respective front benches whoever wins on May 1, are also among the "invisibles" from the showcase Labour and Tory morning press conferences.

To discover who is and who is not basking in their leaders' favour, one may consider the politicians excluded from the setpiece occasions.

The most surprising casualty is the Home Secretary. No word has been heard at the daily press conferences so far from Mr Howard, who is a future contender for the party leadership if the Tories lose the election.

Mr Howard, regarded at Central Office as one of the cleverest members of the Cabinet, is seen by the party's communications strategists as a turn-off on the television. Even John Gummer, the Environment Secretary, another candidate for an early return to the backbenches, has appeared once. Mr Dobson, his opposite number, and Michael Meacher, who shadows environmental protection, have been banished to the outer reaches of Labour's election campaign.

Michael Portillo, the Defence Secretary, has, in common with Mr Howard, done the rounds of the television and radio studios. But he has not appeared at the press conferences which often dictate the election agenda for the rest of the day.

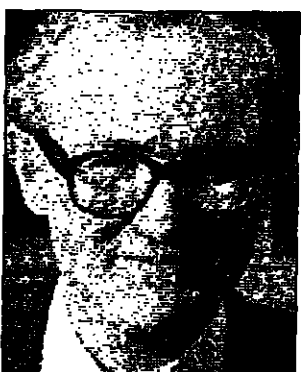
Conservative Central Office fears the worst if the matter of "mad cow" disease is raised. It could mean a return to centristage of Mr Hogg, the accident-prone Agriculture Minister, who so far has been kept out of public view. Mr Hogg, reputed to be the favourite Conservative MP of Peter Mandelson, Labour's campaign manager, was kept



Michael Howard



Clare Short



Douglas Hogg

out of the firing line even when an important report was published this week on hygiene standards in abattoirs.

For Labour the starring role at the news conferences has been taken by Gordon Brown, the Shadow Chancellor, with seven appearances, who answers even more questions than his leader, Robin Cook,

the Shadow Foreign Secretary, and a rival to Mr Brown should Mr Blair lose the election, has led from the front only once. David Blunkett, by contrast, already assured of the education portfolio in a Blair cabinet, has been in the hot seat four times.

Most of the running for the Tories has been made by Michael Heseltine, the Deputy Prime Minister, with five appearances, against three by Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor. Brian Mawhinney, the party chairman, chairs the proceedings but rarely speaks other than to introduce the next questioner.

There have been three appearances apiece for Harriet Harman, Shadow Social Security Secretary, and Margaret Beckett, once out in the cold, who shadows trade and industry. But Ms Short, one of Labour's best-known frontbenchers, who has the overseas development portfolio, has been consigned to the margins. The gaffe-prone Ms Short's previous declaration that she was prepared to pay higher taxes, and her support for a debate on the decriminalisation of cannabis have ensured that she is kept active on the campaign trail, far from party headquarters.

Labour, unlike the Tories, always insist on a woman being on the top platform but appearances can be deceiving. Sometimes the role is ornamental. By contrast, only Gillian Shephard, the Education and Employment Secretary, has featured among Tory women.

Mrs Shephard has had prominence three times — unlike Mrs Bottomley, her Cabinet colleague, who is one of the Conservatives' most ineffectual television performers. Mrs Bottomley is nowhere to be seen — unlike Baroness Thatcher, who may not be part of the press conference team, but has re-emerged as the Tories' first lady at the halfway point.

Stephen Dorrell, the Health Secretary, once seen as John Major's favourite son, is a



Michael Portillo on the Conservative campaign trail in Colchester yesterday

notable absentee. He blotted his copybook earlier this year by straying into the devolution debate. Likewise Chris Smith, Mr Dorrell's shadow, and once a favourite of Tony Blair, has been excluded.

John Prescott, who enjoyed a starring role at the first press conference of the campaign, has not been allowed back

since. Mr Prescott, who was beamed in by satellite link, was given one of the easiest rides of the election campaign. Mr Blair asked the questions.

Andrew Smith, the Shadow Transport Secretary, at the centre of the rumpus over the privatisation — or not — of the air-traffic control system has been kept away from the daily

interrogation by 150 of Fleet Street's finest.

Nor has Sir George Young, the Transport Secretary, been called upon to land the punches.

Like Roger Freeman, the Civil Service Minister, he has been kept hard at work on the campaign trail and far from the television cameras.

Bell summons friends and foes in Tatton walkabout

Charles Bremner in Knutsford finds the BBC's harassed crusader learning politics the hard way as he runs the gauntlet of divided local Tories



THE two faces of Tory woman were on fine display amid the daffodil-sure gardens of Cheshire yesterday as Martin Bell worked to shed the mantle of newsmen and don the crusader's cape to "sort out" Neil Hamilton.

First there was Mrs Anne Estridge, wife of a Conservative defector and retired party official who has switched support from the Tatton MP to the anti-sleaze newsmen. Tall, blonde and soignée in jeans, Mrs Estridge dealt briskly with the "reptiles", as Mr Bell calls his swelling media entourage, when he visited her husband at home in the rich town of Alderley Edge. "No pictures of me," she commanded, but then proceeded to bring tea and coffee to the news people.

A quick drive down the leafy lanes to Nether Alderley offered a glimpse of Tory lady rampant. A knock on the door of the secluded cream mansion by the church produced Christine Hamilton, all guns blazing. An intimidating vision in red, the MP's wife shoofed off *The Times* in the way one might dispatch an annoying bluebottle. "Will you get out. Get off private property. Will you people get off my land."

Her husband, whom she has protected ferociously all week, is not expected to take to the hustings until next week after the local Liberal Democrats follow the Labour Party's decision on Wednesday night to back Mr Bell.

Despite much talk, no heavyweight figure has yet broken the *omertà* that holds force among the tight-knit Tories of Tatton and offered to stand as an independent Conservative. Despite hints, Derek Squirrel, the Deputy Mayor of Knutsford, stayed

silent. The public support of men such as Robin Estridge, 70, a former local party secretary and former Lloyd's broker, is lowering anti-Bell suspicions among Tories. "I am going to support Mr Bell because I am not going to vote for Mr Hamilton," he said. But the local party machine shuns the defectors. "If Mr Estridge was ever an official, it was a hundred years ago," said Barbara Armitage, parish party chief.

Holed up in his house, Mr Hamilton might have been gratified to witness the affection he engendered among at least two of his constituents as Mr Bell walked the streets. The presence of the man in the light suit was too much for the driver of a gleaming Ferrari. He prowled London Street, slowing by the candidate to rev his engine and yell "Martin Pillock".

Another man, in his late thirties, strode up to Mr Bell, 58, and shouted, inches from his face: "This is a bloody disgrace. It's not politics. What do you know about the A34 bypass?" Neil Hamilton has done a damn good job for his constituents. But Mr Bell received the good wishes of a gaggle of elderly women and Frank Field, another local Conservative official who defied the majority, who stopped to shake his hand.

While clearly popular among the streets, especially about women, Mr Bell must bone up quickly on such burning local matters as the planned new runway at nearby Manchester airport and producing positions on the single currency and education. Mr Hamilton, eager to seize on his unfamiliarity with the trade, wants him to agree to a debate. The Bell camp was negotiating yesterday.

Mellor gets in training on the Wembley turf for a tough match

Chelsea's notorious fan ducks as Ben Macintyre tries to pin him down

DAVID MELLOR knelt on the hallowed turf of Wembley yesterday and flicked plastic marbles depicting Chelsea players around a felt pitch to promote a children's football game and his own election campaign.

His opponent was Tony Banks, representing Labour and, for the purposes of yesterday's encounter, West Ham. It was a needle match. "Don't try to cheat," said Mr Banks, after Mr Mellor briefly lost his balance, fouled at least six players from either side and flattened his goal.

The final three-all result, including an own goal by Mr Banks, was patently rigged. "It's a Labour-Tory pact," conceded Mr Banks, whose constituency was Newham NW. "Why not? Our manifestos are the same. Got to encourage him, poor sod. He's got a harder election campaign than me."

Mr Mellor, the former National Heritage Secretary, does indeed face a tough match for re-election in Putney — a Conservative-Labour fight rendered unpredictable by the challenge from Referendum Party leader Sir James Goldsmith, who staged his first party rally in the constituency last night.

Before the Wembley kick-off of the "Flak a Ball" challenge, Mr Mellor was ducking and weaving around the old peoples' homes of Putney, playing a



David Mellor, left, with Tony Banks at Wembley

defensive game and proving exceedingly hard to pin down. "I don't like to be followed by journalists when I'm visiting. It looks like it's just being done for the cameras," the candidate, often accused of egregious self-publicity, explained, having finally been cornered in his constituency offices.

"A vote for Goldsmith is a wasted vote. He's just a bird of passage. I don't think he's even been here," Mr Mellor insisted. But he conceded that Referendum Party votes could chip away at his 7,500 majority and help Labour.

"Only a fool would underestimate the strength of a Labour challenge but, as they say in football, we can 'do the business', he concluded, in what would not be the last soccer allusion of the day.

The David Mellor elected MP for Putney in 1992 is not the same one standing today. The minister who resigned in September of that year after his affair with an out-of-work actress, his connections with a property dealer who lent him a Mayfair flat and his acceptance of a Marbella holiday from the daughter of a PLO official, has since reinvented himself as a radio soccer pundit, newspaper columnist and well-rewarded consultant to defence companies. He has also become a millionaire.

Not all Putney voters are thrilled by his new strip.

"He's doing very well for himself," remarked John Allison, a newspaper vendor who has been in prime position to observe the more lurid vicissitudes of Mr

Mellor's career. "He ought to decide whether he's a politician or a businessman."

The candidate is dismissive of such suggestions. "I don't hear a lot of that. I'm open about what I do. You get the odd negative remark, but it's mostly the journalists who go in for that."

His relationship to the media is a complex one. The press unmade Mr Mellor and then made him again. Mr Mellor plainly dislikes journalists, needs them, and now, as a soccer columnist for *The Mirror* and radio host, he is one.

As Mr Mellor trotted into Wembley to the recorded roar of the crowd it was, as so often with this politician, impossible to tell whether we were watching conscious self-parody, canny political calculation or a man trapped into indignity by the demands of his own persona.

The Conservative candidate did not seem to know himself. As Mr Banks cracked off a series of themed lines — "It's an election of two halves. The second half is going to be harder for the Labour Party", Mr Mellor, like many a sports commentator stuck for a line, blandly opined about the weather.

Then Britain's most notorious Chelsea fan fell silent, nervously blinking like a sick parrot who feels he ought to be over the moon, but somehow isn't.

Tory chairman has his day made

By DANIEL MCGRODY

HE HAS been called many things in his time, most of them deeply unflattering. But Brian Mawhinney has surely never been mistaken for Clint Eastwood before.

It happened in a south London bus shelter and the Tory's chief bouncer blushed and stammered as his female admirer licked her lips and pinned him with a bear hug of an embrace. "Go on, Clint," she shouted, "Make my day

and give me a kiss." Finally prised apart from the Tory chairman, Mary Jenkin, 69, slumped back breathless into her seat saying: "He is their gunslinger; the only tough one they have got. I think he looks a bit like Clint, don't you?"

Her companions sniggered and compared him to characters from Hammer Films, but the compliment had been lapped up by a man frustrated at being corralled in the Central Office bunker doing a desk job for so much of this

campaign. So little has been seen of him Labour wanted him added to the list of endangered species.

"I have been about a lot more than they think. Not as much as I would like but I have to do my day job. Canvassing on the streets is the bit I genuinely love, even the insults and the critics."

He did not have long to wait for the insults as his tour took him through a Norwood street market and eventually on to a debate in a Battersea pub.



Mawhinney, left, and film star Eastwood

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CONSERVATIVES



The Tory manifesto promises continuity in housing policy. It estimates that another 500,000 people will want to purchase their own home during the next decade and pledges to support this aspiration. This means, according to the Tories, a renewed drive to encourage local authority and housing association tenants to buy their own home or move to a home that they can buy. The Conservatives also promise legislation to allow those buying flats to choose a new form of common ownership. The main initiative concerns the long-standing problem of council homes that remain unoccupied. Government policy has been to push the number of empty homes below 3 per cent of the total stock. Councils would be obliged to sell any property that remained empty without good reason for more than a year.

LABOUR



Labour has attacked the Government's housing policy on two grounds: the insecurity felt by many with a mortgage and the failure to develop a strategy for social housing. It proposes to encourage greater provision of more flexible home loans as well as offering stronger protection against disadvantageous mortgage packages. The party will consult on the problem of gazumping. The shortage of social housing will be addressed by permitting local authorities to use capital receipts from the sale of council houses to be reinvested in building new homes or renovating old properties. Labour also gives cautious encouragement to schemes that would increase the involvement of private finance to improve the public housing stock. Councils will again face a statutory obligation to find permanent housing for homeless families.

LIBERAL DEMOCRATS



Priorities are to build more affordable and secure housing while eliminating all involuntary sleeping rough by 2000. The party would encourage public-private partnerships to build more homes, and permit the phased release of capital receipts from council house sales for new construction. A new mortgage benefit would help first-time buyers and replace MIRAS. Over time this new benefit would be merged with housing cost relief. The party would require every council to set up self-funding rent deposit schemes to help homeless people to take private tenancies. More short-term hostel places would be funded. The rights of all tenants would be strengthened. An "empty homes strategy" would require private landlords to return empty properties to the open market.

BALLOT 97

THE TIMES GUIDE TO ELECTION ISSUES

15: Property

Home truths shared by all



Four million new homes may be needed in the next 20 years but who will build them?

HOUSING and property were at the centre of political debate when the Conservatives came to power in 1979. For rather different reasons, they became politically significant again in the early 1990s. At this election, however, they will play a much more subdued role. Although all three parties have new policy suggestions, none has chosen to make them high-profile.

This shift has three main causes. First, the Conservative drive to increase home ownership has largely peaked because almost all those who want — and can afford — to become property owners have achieved that status. Second, the combination of a spectacular downturn in property prices and economic recession between 1990 and 1993 badly damaged the reputation of the Government. Third, Labour has abandoned its previous ambivalence to the private sector and now competes with the Conservatives for the votes of owner-occupiers.

It is beyond doubt that the Conservatives have made the running in housing policy. The first two Thatcher terms saw a very rapid increase in home ownership, with the proportion of all houses held this way rising from 56 to 66 per cent. Since 1979, nearly four million more households have entered this category. A very large proportion of these people — 1.5 million — were former council house tenants. Of these, 1.4 million made that purchase via the right-to-buy programme. They often benefited from large discounts in recognition of the rent that they had paid in previous years. Many were able to make a vast profit during the boom market of the 1980s.

However, by the third Thatcher term, the rapid increase was running out of steam. Additional methods were invented to encourage it. The 1989 Cash Incentive Scheme enabled local authorities to provide grants to council tenants who wanted to buy. The Tenants Incentive Scheme was devised to provide similar assistance to those living in

housing association property. The Government also introduced a voluntary purchase grant to help those same tenants to buy their existing homes. A Housing Act last year let tenants of new social housing buy at a discount.

Home ownership now appears to be close to its natural ceiling. That was confirmed by the relative failure of the Rent-to-Mortgage Scheme, the Conservatives' big idea at the last election for persuading those who might not have believed they could afford to purchase. The Government concedes that take-up rates have been lower than hoped.

Attention has now shifted to reviving the private rented sector. The Conservatives enjoyed some success here through substantial deregulation starting in 1988. More than 300,000 households returned to this sector relatively quickly. The 1993 Budget launched a rent-a-room initiative, allowing the first £3,250 received from a lodger to pass without tax. That has since been increased to £4,250. The

Tories have also tried to persuade council tenants to opt for private rather than local authority control, especially in social housing (mostly elderly people in sheltered accommodation and low-income individuals and families).

Housing associations are now the premier provider of new social housing, supplemented by the Large Scale Voluntary Transfers programme, which encourages councils to transfer ownership to private landlords.

Labour and the Liberal Democrats have accused the Government of indifference towards social housing. The Government has been reasonably content with an annual increase of new social lettings of about 60,000 properties. Others, including the all-party Environment Select Committee, have sought a much higher total.

A similar dispute rages about homelessness. Labour notes that more than 40,000 families live in temporary accommodation. The Liberal Democrats have been especial-

ly concerned about the numbers sleeping rough. Demand for home ownership is driven by demographic and social trends. Britain's high divorce rate, and the desire of young people to set up on their own as soon as possible, will fuel extra demand, mostly for smaller houses. That could mean 4.4 million new homes will be needed over the next 20 years. Matching that demand will be difficult, given environmental considerations. Recent upward movement in property prices is likely to be sustained. These trends might have proved helpful to the Conservatives. However, their claim to be the party of property has been battered in the 1990s. The collapse in prices and severe economic recession hit many of those who had been encouraged to become home owners. At one stage, more than 1,000 homes a week were being repossessed. Millions were trapped by negative equity.

Economic recovery since 1993, with a gradual appreciation in property prices, has

eased the problem for most. Repossessions have slowed to a relative trickle and negative equity has abated. The Government did not help its case by its progressive assault on Mortgage Interest Tax Relief — a middle-class perk that Margaret Thatcher had always protected. MIRAS is now in the process of gradual eradication. Fortunately for the Tories, the impact of this has been camouflaged by the sharp fall in interest rates since the 1992 election.

Under Tony Blair, Labour has moved to exploit government discomfort. Neil Kinnock dropped the party's hostility to council house sales — largely a matter of practicality — but Labour still gave the impression of active indifference towards those who owned their property. Mr Blair has made enormous efforts to show his sympathies.

During the recession, Labour urged a more interventionist approach. At this election, Labour promises to work with mortgage providers to offer a wider range of more flexible arrangements. It also wants to extend consumer protection against the sale of suspect mortgage packages. It has even taken on the issue of gazumping, although an initial commitment to legislation has been tempered to a pledge to consult on a solution.

The question of homelessness remains important, although perhaps not as prominent as at the last election. A clutch of initiatives is generally recognised as having cut the number sleeping rough, but a high number are still without a permanent home. Labour and the Lib Dems pledge to tackle the problem more vigorously than the Conservatives.

In each case, a crucial component of their plans is the release of capital receipts held by local councils that were chiefly accumulated during the crash programme of council house sales which proved such a crucial part of the Thatcher era.

On Monday:
the environment

WHAT THEY SAID

The Conservative aim should be a property-owning democracy
Winston Churchill, 1946

Only the Conservatives can be trusted to support those who own their home or aspire to own their home
John Major

Home ownership is what 80 per cent of people want... we want to give yet more people the opportunity to buy
John Gummer

We have to be clear who should be in charge of housing. It is not the Government, not councils, not housing associations, but the people themselves
Tony Blair

Labour has, for some time, been committed to the phased release of capital receipts... it makes little sense to forbid local authorities from using this money
Tony Blair

We are the only party truly committed to eliminating homelessness in this country. This scourge must be ended by the year 2000
Paddy Ashdown

... We haven't got a particularly strong or new line on housing...
Towards 1996 — leaked Liberal Democrat memorandum

THE FACTS

□ About 68 per cent of homes are owned by their occupiers, compared with 56 per cent in 1979. That means nearly four million more people have bought their homes in that period.

□ Of those 4 million, about 1.5 million are former council tenants, the vast majority of whom acquired their home under the Conservative right-to-buy programme.

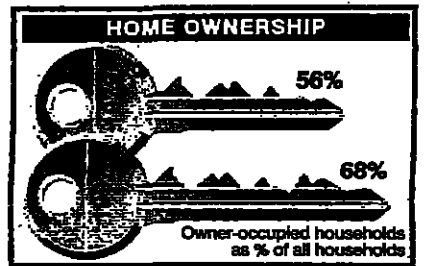
□ Only 18 per cent of homes are owned by local authorities, compared with 29 per cent in March 1979. About 5 per cent are managed by housing associations compared with 2 per cent 18 years ago.

□ A total of 300,000 more households have become part of the private rented sector since deregulation in 1988, adding about 25 per cent to the total stock. This has partly reversed a long-term decline in the sector, which had collapsed from about 90 per cent of all properties before the First World War.

□ The number of empty homes is estimated at more than 800,000.

□ At the height of the recession, 1,000 homes were being repossessed each week. The slow revival in house prices has brought repossessions close to the average level in 1989.

□ Up to 4.4 million extra homes may be required over the next two decades.



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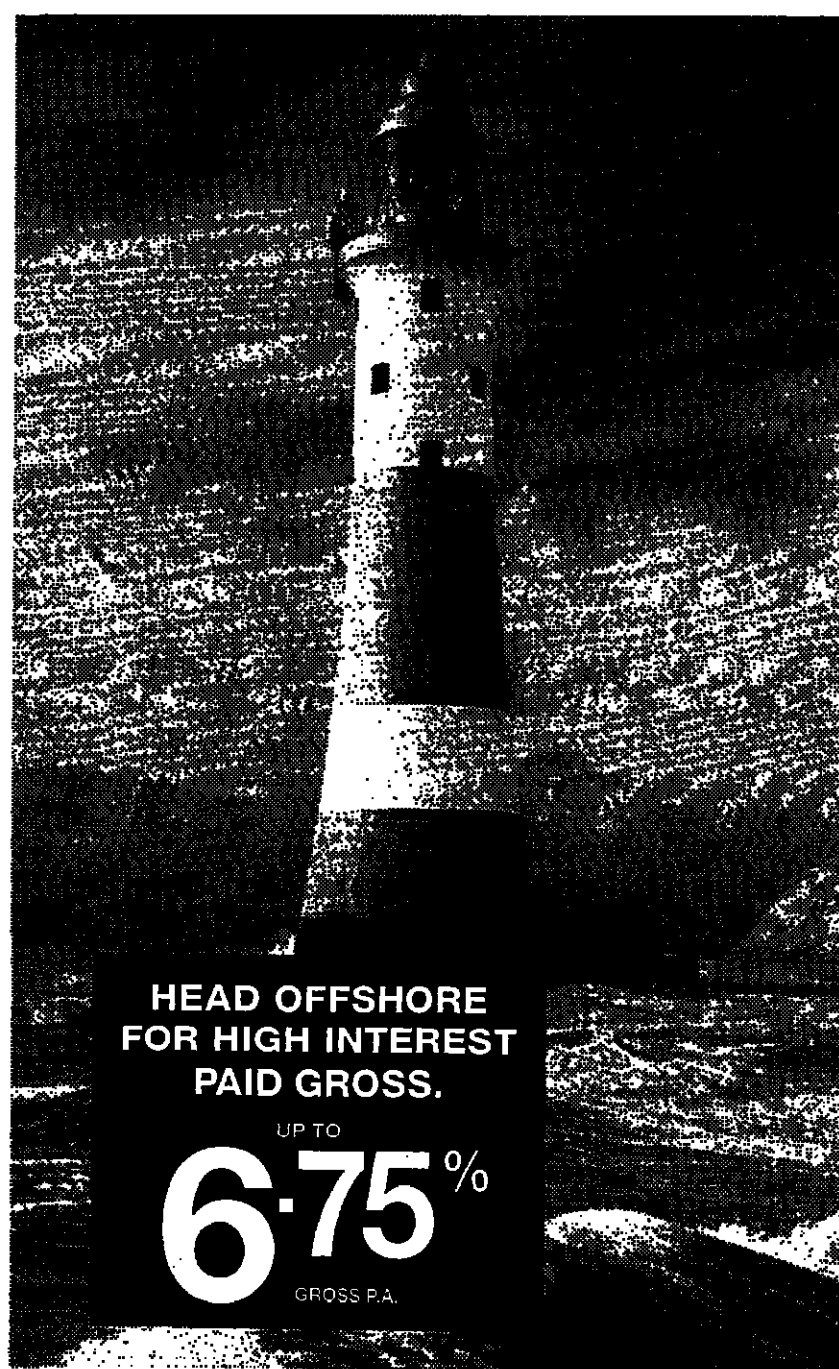


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Oxbridge retains education grip on hopeful MPs

OXFORD and Cambridge, the traditional nurseries for politicians, have educated one in six candidates from the three main parties, a survey by *The Times* discloses today.

Academics believe that not even the large number of MPs retiring from politics, nor a resounding victory by new Labour, will loosen the universities' grip on a third of the seats in the Commons. Oxbridge alumni have tended to stand in safer constituencies.

The *Times* survey also shows that Conservative candidates are the better educated, in terms of university degrees, and that Liberal Democrats are more likely to have studied at former polytechnics.

Oxbridge's supply of 347 out of 1,884 main party candidates is almost identical to the last election. Yet while the number of Conservative Oxbridge hopefuls has fallen from 198 to 184, new Labour shows a rise from 76 to 85. That includes a 50 per cent rise in Cambridge-educated Labour candidates.

Growing numbers of Labour candidates have university degrees. In the first Labour government of 1923, just 14 per cent of the party's MPs had been to university. At this election, 64 per cent of candidates went through higher education.

Philip Norton, Professor of Government at Hull University (which has educated 21 candidates), said the survey pointed towards the homogenisation of British politics.

As the jobs politicians do before being elected has become less varied, so the educational backgrounds of MPs have become more alike.

Professor Norton said that in 1945 one third of Labour MPs had been to university against 58 per cent of Conservatives. In 1992, the figures were 61 per cent and 73 per cent. "Conservative MPs are now slightly less likely to be Oxbridge and certainly less likely to be public school," he said. "Notably there is an increase in university graduates for Labour. You are coming more towards the Identikit MP, which may be grammar school rather than public school, then university."

One in six candidates from the three main parties went to Oxford or Cambridge University, a *Times* survey discloses. David Charter analyses the findings

The survey reflects Oxford's continuing dominance on British political life. It has educated seven of the ten post-war prime ministers as well as Tony Blair.

Oxford provided 118 and Cambridge 83 of the MPs returned in the 1992 election. The next greatest number from a single university was 16 from Glasgow, followed by 14 from Edinburgh and London.

The pre-eminence of Oxbridge was put down to the two universities' highly selective intake and their traditional tutorial style of teaching. Oxford's top position was explained by the university's highly regarded politics, philosophy and economics (PPE) course, regarded as a foundation for a political career.

Marilyn Butler, Rector of Exeter College, Oxford, said: "You are taught in a method here that is very vocal and there is a lot of arguing back. People from all backgrounds choose to come to a place which has got a certain kind of thrusting and forceful educational style — which is a dialogue." Cambridge's lower number of parliamentarians reflected its culture and

courses, compared with Oxford, she said. "The basic reason is that Cambridge does not study politics, it studies political theory. PPE at Oxford creates a critical mass of people interested in politics."

However, John Dunn, Professor of Political Theory at Cambridge, who defeated Kenneth Clarke as an undergraduate in a vote for vice-president of the Cambridge Union, dismissed the theory of the PPE factor as nonsense. "Historically, Oxford has been the university of government for a very long time and there just are closer ties between the political and administrative summit and Oxford than there are with Cambridge," he said.

The predominance of Oxbridge reflected the universities' mission to educate the nation's high-flyers, whatever their backgrounds. "It would take a very dramatic historic episode like a revolution to actually break this pattern."

However, a future Labour Cabinet is not likely to be as Oxbridge-dominated as the most recent government. John Major, the only one of his 23-member Cabinet not to have been to university, surrounded himself with 17 Oxbridge graduates, while Tony Blair, himself a graduate of St John's College, Oxford, chose just five as senior spokesmen.

The survey also finds that 580, or 31 per cent, of the candidates had no university education. That compares with 38.5 per cent of candidates at the last election.

In this year's campaign, 12 other "old" universities have produced 20 or more candidates. Seven former polytechnics have provided more than five candidates, led by Manchester Metropolitan (13), Wolverhampton (10), Liverpool John Moores (7) and Oxford Brookes (7).

Research by James Ashton and Sarah Atkinson



Simon Hughes alongside the "air ambulance" on the roof of the Royal London Hospital, Whitechapel, where he paid a whirlwind visit

Hurricane Hughes breezes by the bedside

HALF propped-up on her pillows in the Cotton Ward of the Royal London Hospital at Whitechapel, Florence Warden lay with her head slumped forward. Was she conscious? It was hard to tell.

Sitting by her bed, a thin, middle-aged man with a tattoo on his arm held her hand. Silent, motionless and blank with worry, he stared into space. Neither knew — neither would have cared — that Simon Hughes, the Liberal Democrat health spokesman and candidate for Southwark, North & Bermondsey, was on his way.

Unusually, Mr Hughes is not so enveloped in the self-importance a politician carries with him as to forget the world he is in. His entourage entered Cotton Ward like a tropical cyclone. But at the eye of the cyclone — Mr Hughes himself — was a calm and kindness which, even in the few minutes he spent with each patient, communicated itself.

Politicians and hospitals hardly mix. The scene teetered between tragedy and farce as Mr Hughes knelt before an old chap with respiratory problems, wheezing through a high-tech elephant mask. Mr Hughes, in smart Commons suit but affording, now, the captive audience that the Commons has never granted him, made a short speech on the evils



MATTHEW PARRIS

of smoking. The old boy, in blue pyjamas, was in no position to argue. Mr Hughes wheeled round to Professor Robert Davies, who was accompanying us. "Well, will there be a cure for asthma?" He stopped short of adding, "Yes or No?" The professor looked taken aback.

"Hello my dear!" called Mr Hughes gaily as he passed women in various states of insensibility or distress. "Now, what seems to be the problem?" he said, approaching the bed of Betty Weemes, lying provocatively across one pillow.

"The winders need cleaning," said Mrs Weemes, who had donned earrings for the occasion and looked rather smart. Alice Peeke, lying in the next bed, waved.

Mr Hughes had put them at their ease. He then attempted a serious talk with them about the structure and funding of the NHS. By now his aide was getting impatient. "Come on Simon," he implored, with a weariness born of long practice, but Hurricane Simon could not leave without talking to all the patients he had left out. As we moved down the corridor, we realised we had lost him again. "He's popped into another ward to hug everybody," said an experienced Hughes-watcher.

We hurried past an Accident and Emergency room where a fellow, blood pouring from one eye and his shirt soaked, scarcely moved his head as the hurricane passed. There are moments during political campaigns when the backdrop looks like precisely that: pictures — harrowing, exotic or bizarre — projected as arresting scenery before which the candidates strike a pose, wait for the camera flash, then pass on.

In the campaigns of the next century it may prove unnecessary for politicians to leave their party HQs. Fishing, farming, shopping or hospi-

tal images will be recreated around them by hologram. But every now and again, Mr Hughes spoils the perfect artificiality of the occasion by getting genuinely stuck into a human problem which had brushed his elbow. He became caught up in an inquiry as to what had started a fire in which a mother of two children had been burnt. Unlikely to solve this, Mr Hughes was finally pulled away, begging the children to look after their mum.

Hurricane Simon hit the "air-ambulance" helipad. The chopper was summoned as we watched. As men in orange boiler-suits leapt into the roaring, LibDem-yellow machine, which took to the skies in a rush of wind, you could see the envy in his eyes. Why, with this machine, he could descend from above in a big noise, dispensing mercy and Liberal Democracy.

The visit over, politicians, aides, reporters and photographers left the hospital. Up in the Cotton Ward, the man with the tattoo was still holding Florence's hand: still silent, still motionless, still blank with worry. Her head was still bowed.

For Simon Hughes another hospital, another election, another whirlwind tour. For Florence Warden, the strangest of dreams.

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Crusader to the manner born

Etiquette is all to the formidable Gloria Petersen. Americans are flocking to her seminars, which are designed to stem the rising tide of boorishness, says Quentin Letts

BUSINESS is good right now for Gloria Petersen and it is all down, she says, to the "McManners" generation of modern America.

Ms Petersen, a tidily powdered, spangle-eyed Chicago dame in her middle years, teaches etiquette to the American Midwest. Her charm school seminars, which are attended by all ranks of people from bank chairmen to junior office orderlies, teach people the most basic facts of dainty life.

She puts them right on how to shake hands, how not to hold a knife like a pen, the intricacies of "kitchen etiquette", "elevator etiquette",

much as \$165 (£100) a day for Junior to be taught how not to eat like a monkey. The market is booming.

Ms Petersen declares — and it would be impolite to doubt her — that instruction in the art of etiquette is more dearly needed now in the United States than ever before.

She traces the breakdown of polite society back to the inauguration of John Kennedy as president in 1961, when the youthful Democrat wore no hat. Gradually, dress codes faded and, with the permissive society and the anti-Vietnam War protests and the rise of "latchkey kids" and the retreat of traditional household meal times, the family dynamic disappeared.

Nowadays, you have the kids of parents who themselves were not brought up proper, so it should hardly be a surprise that they wear their baseball caps back to front and know not how to utter the magic word "please".

Ms Petersen started her charm school in 1985 after working for 16 years in the corporate world. She realised that when it came to corporate entertaining, younger executives were increasingly nervous about the prospect of having dinner with their boss. Would their table manners meet approval? How about the spouse's?

Away from the table, people whose childhood evenings had been spent gawping at prime-time television realised that their small talk was inadequate. How should they keep a conversation going? There were plenty of areas of doubt: the thank-you letter, how to remember names, make introductions. Here was Gloria Petersen's vocation.

For some, there is no higher calling than to convert pygmies to the Anglican faith.

"There's an entire generation out there which does not know how to behave. That's what I can teach them"

and even how to behave at that modern business phenomenon, the "power tea".

"The Nineties are going to go down as the decade of diplomacy," reveals Ms P in a central Chicago restaurant, blotting her lips with a napkin in the approved fashion before drinking from her lunchtime beaker of water.

It is daunting to dine with a doyen of the etiquette world. One frets, fidgets. Is there spinach in one's teeth? Has one put one's knife and fork at "20 past four" on finishing the main course? What about that partially picked chicken bone?

As if reading my thoughts, Ms Petersen summons the air through her neat nostrils and says: "We do NOT involve the fingers." This is one of her sayings, along with "do not talk with your cutlery" and "don't make puppy sounds", which she conveyed to me just after I had taken a plug of drink. Also: "Don't kill and saw the meat — it is already dead." That one is an important reminder for a region famed for its calf-sized steaks.

"We have taken rudeness as far as it will go," she continues, little pinkie tucked neatly into the glass.

With her two children, having grown up, and her husband, sadly, now off the ranch, she tours the more prosperous districts of the American heartlands in search of souls troubled by their lack of social grace.

Hundreds of thousands have heard her speak. "An entire generation is now out there which does not know how to behave. They want to know. That's what I can teach them."

It pays pretty well. The rates vary on size of class, but she likes to clear \$2,000 (about £1,250) for a group session. She has an associate, Maryann Downes-Bagley, who teaches manners to children. They start as young as eight years old and parents pay as



Dainty tips: Gloria Petersen even teaches elevator etiquette

Others strive to save the whale, or to play cricket for England. For Chicago's Gloria Petersen, true satisfaction was to be gained in coaching Midwesterners out of their

boorish tendencies, to train them not to peer pointedly at their watches during dinner or sneeze theatrically in polite circles, not to pick their teeth or chew their nails or give basso profundo burrrrrps when meeting dignitaries.

She has a list of the most commonly asked questions she receives. "What conversation topics should be avoided?" is a common one. Ms Petersen's answer is tailored to suit America: "Sex, religion, politics, and money."

In the US, as she explains, people often blurt out gaffes such as "how much do you earn?" and "gee, nice watch — bet that cost ya a bit!" She shudders. Other questions on the list include: "How do you let someone know they have

poor hygiene? How do you tell a man he has food on his moustache? How can I keep my name from being mispronounced?"

In a city with so many Poles, that last question is a real poser. Ms Petersen's ingenious solution is to say: "Ah, Mr Zbigniewski! Kindly teach me how to pronounce your name."

At the Petersen class I attended, there were 12 adults, mostly well-to-do female executives from the telephone company AT&T and a leading Chicago bank.

Sandra, a smiling forty-something, had old-fashioned standards and wanted to improve herself.

Heidi, rather younger, was the "victim of a merger and in transition" (a polite way of saying that she was out of work). She wanted to burnish her etiquette to help her chances of landing a good job. Joyce was heading back to her home state of Ohio to start her own business and wanted to brush up on her social skills. She would probably be doing some entertaining and wanted to know the proper form.

Ms Petersen showed them a typical place setting at a restaurant and probed them on which knives to use when, on where the side plate belongs, and how to spoon soup away from oneself.

On that classic dilemma of how to peel a banana at a state banquet, the Petersen doctrine is that one should "avoid ordering what is not attractively eaten". She reminds her classes that the hamburger, while a high point of American cooking, is a tricky piece of kit when one is entertaining certain South American folk, for whom eating by hand is a no-no.

Modern American etiquette also involves deft teaching in electronic conversation via telephone, computer or fax (quite rightly she forbids the speaker phone), plus the stolid dogmas of political correctness. For instance, Ms

Petersen recommends to clients that they learn to refer to the "waitron" (a revolting term which is slowly replacing "waiter" and "waitress"). They are also urged to learn to refer to "briefings" rather than "meetings", and to talk of overseas acquaintances as "non-American-born" rather than "foreign".

"Good God," I blurt out. "What on earth is wrong with foreign?" Ms Petersen explains: "The dictionary definition of 'foreign' is that it is something that does not belong."

On the first-names-versus-

"Try to remember not to kill and saw the meat — it is already dead..."

surnames controversy, she is a traditionalist. "We jump to first names too quickly in this country," she says. "You will absolutely never offend anyone with formality. I was 'Mr Letts' throughout, and felt a rare sense of inner calm that night."

The brash may say that it is all a waste of time, and that in a world which becomes ever more commerce-led, we will all end up as mannerless oiks. Maybe. But with people like Gloria Petersen at the front line, the battle is not yet lost. Pupils of her excellent charm school are given a "workbook" which is decorated with helpful quotations.

William Thourby said it all: "In this world there are two kinds of class — first class and no class. You must develop the first or you will have to live with the second."



Getting a head start in life: "We have taken rudeness as far as it will go," says Ms Petersen, who believes that instruction in the art of etiquette is dearly needed in the United States

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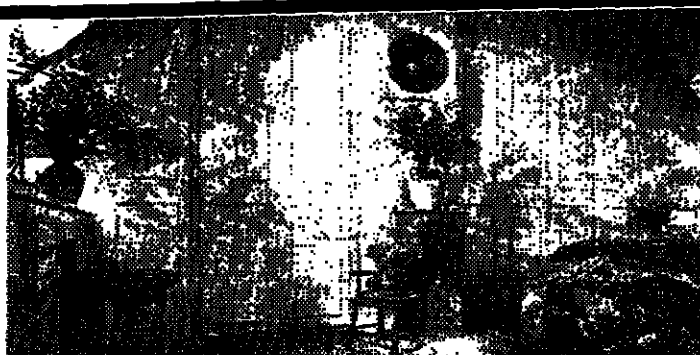
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Philip Howard



■ Rogue or telephone or greasy — polls can be hobbit-forming

In a poll among the grassroots there lived a hobbit. Not a nasty, rogue opinion poll, filled with pie charts and oozy extrapolations, nor yet a secret poll privately commissioned by a political party, with nothing in it to sit down on or get your teeth into. It was a hobbit poll. And that means comfort and fundamental conclusions that a man can sit happily down on. And no need to cross the street and put your umbrella up to avoid one of Bob Worcester's clipboard-wonks, with their ingratiating, fixed smiles and miles of meaningless questions to which there is no sensible answer that does not start, "It all depends what you mean by..."

This hobbit was a very intelligent hobbit. And he had noticed two things. First, that hobbits and polls were born at approximately the same date. For George Gallup founded the American Institute of Public Opinion in 1935. And *The Hobbit* was published in 1937, and has never been out of print since. And second, that from their names, opinion polls have a place in the insanely complicated family trees of wild Tolkienery. For instance, Gallup is one of the Galadrim ("tree-people"), the Elves (mostly Silvan) of Lórien, and by his name descended from golden-graphic Galadriel herself. I fear that NOP has Orc blood, and is related to Nóm, the Mannish word for "wisdom". While MORI is a name of power and terror, for Nori is a Dwarf of the House of Durin. And Moria means nothing less than Khazad-dûm, "black pit", the greatest of the Dwarf-halls, the mansion and folk-home of Durin's Folk.

The hobbit, whose own name has passed into common speech along with Gallup, wondered whether there might be some other connection between these two fashionable schools of rubbish, NOP and ORC. So he set out to test his theory on his *Hobbit's Rural Rides*. And he found that the line between Middle-earth and opinion-funsters is as strong as an Ent and as rank as Pipe-weed.

Now of course there was fantasy before hobbits, from *Daphnis and Chloë* to Peter Pan. And Herodotus invented statistics of sorts, 25 centuries before Gallup. But the cult for both hobbits and opinion polls is an old song that is sung particularly loudly today, from American campuses to British politicians engaged in their latest fantasy war between good and evil.

Neither is the whole truth. *The Hobbit* was the one flawless masterpiece that Tolkien wrote. *The Silmarillion* and the rest (to some extent even *The Lord of the Rings*) are waffle as pretentious as the manifestos of all parties. They cannot be translated into meaningful English. Both hobbits and pollsters are sometimes silly. Both set out to dazzle outsiders with cod scholarship. When pollsters or Terry Pratchett fans tell you that something (a campaign?) is historic, remind them that history is merely something that may or may not have happened, written by someone who was not there and read in manifestos or fantasies by the gullible.

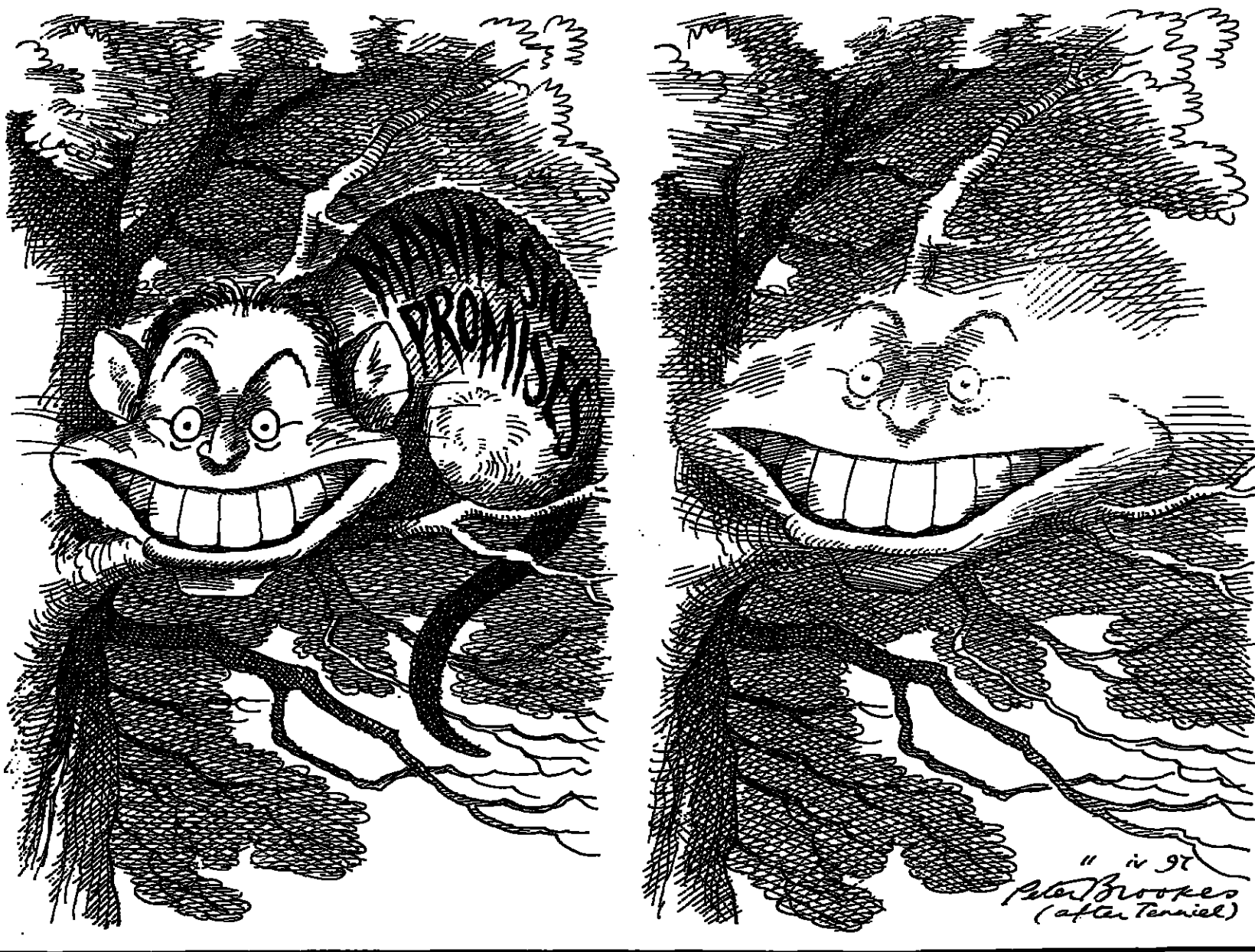
The same degradation of a sharp technical term as has happened to *meaningful* in fantasy and Pollspeak (cf. *waffle*, *froth* and *hypocrisy*). *Meaningful* was once used by philosophers to distinguish a statement that could be verified or disproved from one that was in this technical sense "meaningless". So, "Today is Friday" is *meaningful*. But "It is a beautiful day" is meaningless. Then some pretentious prat started to use *meaningful* as a posh variant for "expressive" or "meaning", as in "The spin doctor gave him a *meaningful* look." And *meaningful* became unusable by any careful writer or speaker. The word is still of course widely used by politicians, as in their *meaningful dialogue*.

Both hobbits and opinion polls are branches of fantasy. Both are popular because they are escapes from being grown-up in a real world.

One Poll to bind them all, One Poll to find them blind

One Poll to bring them all and in the darkness blind them

As Art the Learned, pollster and fantasist, wrote in his Prologue to *Isengard* about AD 1130: "But if anything is mistaken in this account, one should prefer whatever proves to be more accurate."



Blair's control freaks

If the Labour leader can't break free of his programmers now, and show he's human, he will never do so in office

Tony Blair is in trouble. The assertion, you may think, is ludicrous. Though the poll gap may be narrowing, Labour remains miles ahead. I still expect Mr Blair to win. But which battle? There are two: there is his fight to return to Westminster in May with a comfortable majority. Second, and quite different, there is the struggle to establish himself as a Prime Minister who can win the respect and hold the hearts of the British people in the often adverse years to follow.

In his anxiety about winning the first battle, Mr Blair is forfeiting the second, and the error is becoming serious. Whether or not he wins on May 1, it will thereafter matter hugely to him whether he is still loved. Unless he is careful, the electorate could be on the verge of carrying shoulder-high and dumping at the door of Downing Street a man they inwardly dislike and have already secretly resolved to punish.

Look at a converse example. Though it remains fashionable to disparage John Major's seven years in government, his record will soon be seen as one of surprising achievement. With a majority dwindling below zero and his party split by a question of tectonic proportions — Europe — Mr Major kept the parliamentary show on the road and ran a rather active administration.

How? Critical to his unsinkability has been the Prime Minister's consistently greater popularity than his party. Though often mocked, John Major has never really been disliked. At various crunchpoints in his premiership, mutinous Tory MPs, a wary eye on their own constituency associations, have been reminded that the Conservative Party in the country likes — I will almost say loves — its leader, and has never wavered in this. Last June, during the leadership election, this proved critical. And, hard though Mr Major may find this to believe, a sneering press could have been a good deal more brutal had more journalists and their readers found it possible seriously to dislike him (or, one might add, his family). He has kept the sympathy of millions. From the start.

This is the one citadel Tony Blair has failed so far to storm. He has not won the hearts of his party, of the press, or of the electorate. He has not even won their affections. If the triumphs on May 1, then the process has now gone beyond reason. The cabal has forgotten that the argument for reform was at least as important as the whip by which it was accomplished. Now the cabalists sim-

I see no reason why Mr Blair should despair of being liked. He is not, despite his present reputation, a cold fish. From none of my early brushes with him as a younger MP do I remember an inhuman or unfeeling individual. Those who knew him well in earlier days find the image now presented to the nation hard to reconcile with the man they once knew. Good friends say they do not recognise the radio-controlled android that the rest of Britain now seems to see: that slightly spooky quality evaporates. They insist, on closer acquaintance.

How, then, has it come about? The dehumanising of Tony Blair has arisen as part of one of the great political confidence tricks of our era. This has been the campaign by a handful of individuals around him to persuade their party, to persuade the media, to persuade history, to persuade each other and to persuade the Labour leader himself that his party's recovery in the polls since 1992 has been due mainly to the marketing and management techniques of these men.

It has not. By far the most powerful reason for Labour's recovery has been the nation's impatience after nearly two decades of government by the other party, and our exasperation with John Major's unlikely present crew. A second factor has been the good impression given by Tony Blair personally, on his accession to the leadership. A third has been the unthreatening nature of his newly found ideology, and the sense of unity now conveyed by his party.

Only here, and marginally, do the cabalists of whom I speak have half an argument. Their religion has been the cult of control, their motto *Grip for Grip's Sake*. The new leader did need to take a grip, and they helped him. But the process has now gone beyond reason. The cabal has forgotten that the argument for reform was at least as important as the whip by which it was accomplished. Now the cabalists sim-

ply worship the whip. Within the party and in their dealings with the press, they have become an anti-intellectual force, trying to close off or close down all questioning. Convinced that they are the architects of Mr Blair's ascendancy, they have convinced him that they must be the guardians of it. They have surrounded their leader by a wall of glass. Access to him must be controlled. The nature of his exchanges with the news media must be controlled. Contact with the general public must be controlled. No unrehearsed encounter, no situation which might develop in an unpredictable direction must be allowed.

What must baffle the real professionals at public relations in politics — such as Kenneth Clarke — is that this is such dreadful public relations. It is kids' PR: grade 1. The public love you for your untucked shirts and untucked opinions. When your hair is out of place or your danger provokes a self-indulgent giggle, they laugh with you. When your hair or your phraseology is sprayed into place, they laugh at you.

Nobody who has watched Mr Blair's news conferences can have failed to notice a clammy chill in the atmosphere as the event unfolds with the precision and behind-the-scenes organisation of a Royal Wedding. But every now and again the staging slips for a moment and you see the wires. For me, the episode when it became clear that his staff had told him from whom to accept questions was one of those defining moments. The tension in Mr Blair's eyes, the sweat on his face, the working jaw, clenched neck-muscles and anger in the eyes of his lieutenants whenever control falters are horrid to behold.

They are not new to me. There was a time, after 1986, when a sort of triumphalism gripped Conservative Central Office, and those around Margaret Thatcher began to interpret her

predominance as reason not to relax and act generously, but to seek out and squash every gnaw that might tease her dignity. She grew distant, her guard over-nightly. All sense of humour was lost. The wall of glass descended. The name Maggie looked ever less appropriate. Former fans ceased to like her.

That is how she ended. It is no way for Mr Blair to start. The "Lynton Charles" between "Tony" and "Blair" looks daily less misplaced.

It is not too late for Mr Blair. Well into his campaign in 1992, John Major kicked over the traces. To the astonishment of a cynical news media he mounted a battered soap-box produced from the boot of a car in Luton, and spoke to an unruly crowd. The gesture was of defiance, not only of a seemingly adverse fate, but of his own communications team.

"Turning points" are too easy to invent with hindsight. Luton was no more a turning point for the Tories than the Sheffield rally was for Labour, but just as Sheffield rugged at the sleeve of a nation already doubtful about Labour, so, in memorable shorthand Luton gave people phrases for what they already liked about Mr Major, and for what had thus far irritated them about Conservative Central Office's gutless campaign, with its rigged "meetings" between the Prime Minister and the people.

The soap-box also reminded us of what, if we were less cowed by the fashionable and self-serving idiocies of the public relations industry, we ought to find obvious: that nothing gets through to people like spontaneity. Think back to that ambush earlier this week, when Neil Hamilton and his wife confronted Martin Bell. In a day of contrived photo-opportunities by party leaders, this seemed the only unpackaged news of the day, easily knocking "bigger" stories from the front pages.

Mr Blair will be better able than I am to see the occasions in the days ahead when he too could knock the programmed campaign from its course; when he could seize the microphone, call a heckler from the crowd and offer him a platform; when he could smash his way out of a daily schedule and go walkabout. We need a visible symbol that he has broken the grip of his minders — scorned them, even. We need him to show he is not afraid of them, not afraid of us, not afraid of argument, not afraid of the unrehearsed. He could do it now. If he will not now, then will he ever?

Matthew Parris

Nobody who has watched Mr Blair's news conferences can have failed to notice a clammy chill in the atmosphere as the event unfolds with the precision and behind-the-scenes organisation of a Royal Wedding. But every now and again the staging slips for a moment and you see the wires. For me, the episode when it became clear that his staff had told him from whom to accept questions was one of those defining moments. The tension in Mr Blair's eyes, the sweat on his face, the working jaw, clenched neck-muscles and anger in the eyes of his lieutenants whenever control falters are horrid to behold.

They are not new to me. There was a time, after 1986, when a sort of triumphalism gripped Conservative Central Office, and those around Margaret Thatcher began to interpret her

Hitchens' stitchin's

THE LABOUR PARTY'S morning news conference came alive for the first time yesterday when *The Express* unleashed its secret weapon: Peter Hitchens, a nuclear-tipped retorteller of a reporter who cannot abide Labour, old or new.

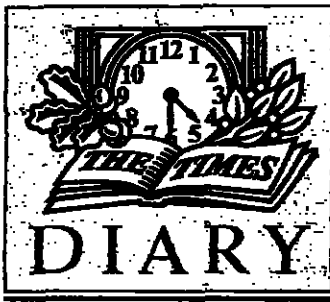
When Hitchens jumped to his feet and demanded satisfactory answers to his questions on education, Blair became so exasperated that he warned this frothing mastiff to control himself, otherwise "we may not call you again".

Hitchens and Labour are sparring partners of old. For he tormented Neil Kinnock about the so-called Jennifer's Ear episode of the last election, concerning a party political broadcast about two girls with ear trouble. One enjoyed private treatment and was seen immediately; the other, working class, went for NHS treatment and was kept waiting.

But Hitchens discovered that the broadcast painted an unfair picture of the health service, and hounded Kinnock so much afterwards that eventually he was roughed up by Labour minders and made the news himself. Yesterday, Hitchens accused

Blair of lying, claiming that the Labour Party manifesto backs guidelines that would prevent parents sending their children to grant-maintained schools such as the London Oratory, which is attended by Blair's son.

"You are quite wrong," blurted Blair before issuing his warning to Hitchens, who has clearly escaped the clutches of *The Express's* proprietor, the Labour-supporting Lord Hollick.



● Tony Blair yesterday missed a chance to thank the man who has done more to damage the Tory party than any of his own troops. Mohamed Al Fayed flew in to Battersea heliport just as Blair was waiting in the lounge, and although he clearly saw Al Fayed land, he scurried before there was any chance of an encounter.

Strong hand

ALL THOSE in favour of stricter discipline in schools might care to note the recent example of a Tokyo teacher. Leading a school camping trip, he found that two pupils had brought sweets along and not offered to share them. To punish them, he presented them with two hunting knives and told them to disembowel themselves, saying it was the only honourable course to take.

When they refused, he beat them with a tent pole and had to be restrained by colleagues when he began to make a noose from a guy-rope. In his defence, he said he was annoyed with them. "We have suspended the teacher for three months," said the Tokyo school board's Tomio Shimazaki. "We wish to make it clear that ordering pupils to commit hara-kiri is no longer acceptable."

Don't count...

THE TORY chicken, dragged into the mire of the election campaign to scare Tony Blair into a televised debate with John Major, has a past as an athlete. My picture shows the old bird in fester days, in another election year, 1992, running the London Marathon.

Yesterday at the Flora London Marathon office, amid the preparations for this year's race on Sunday, there were no signs that the chicken was going to run again. "We've got a rhino, a bear, a Womble and a sunflower," said an official. "But no chickens."

Papa proper

TOLLING BELLS rather than rutting bulls sum up the mood for this year's Hemingway Days festival in Key West, Florida. Started

16 years ago in honour of Papa Hemingway, who lived periodically on the island, the annual five-day festival features prodigious beer-drinking and a Hemingway lookalike contest.

Hemingway's family, however, have had enough and are demanding an undisclosed fee and some degree of control if the festival is to continue. Hemingway's middle son, Patrick, has complained that the types who attend the festival have given Hemingway the reputation of a "big drinking beachcomber bum". The lookalikes have vowed to continue their contest nonetheless.



Chicken running

and no one is proposing to argue with 100 large, drunk men in thick beards and dungarees.

Prep done

STANDING as the anti-sleaze candidate for Tatton is not Martin Bell's first experience of electoral politics. In October 1981, Bell was 13 and head boy of Taverham Hall, a small prep school in Norfolk. His teachers organised a mock election. Bell, whose journalist father wrote staunchly liberal opinion pieces for *The Eastern Daily Press*, was chosen as the Liberal candidate.

"He was very popular and very articulate," says Olaf Brun, who stood as the Conservative against Bell and is now an East Anglian arable farmer. "I suppose I represented the immobile country lot." Wayne Lawton, the present headmaster, says that according to school records, Bell "took the school by the horns. His powers of advocacy won it for him."

The result: Brun, Conservative, 17 votes; a socialist who went on to Winchester, 18 votes; Bell, Liberal, 19 votes. And, adds Brun, "Martin was the only boy to get a scholarship that year".

P.H.S

Labour's learning curvers

Tessa Blackstone

says eternal students will be encouraged

Britain's best way to promote prosperity is to end complacency about the skills of the workforce. Fifty-three per cent of our 18-year-olds are in education, compared to 84 per cent in France and 85 per cent in Germany. One in six adults has a very low level of literacy and numeracy, being unable, for example, to calculate change from simple purchases. Among employers, more than one in five believe their firms' productivity is hampered by skill shortages. While the Tories dither, Labour has devised imaginative policies to respond to these failures.

Two challenges must be faced. First, a wider range of people should be helped to unleash their talents and to improve their employability. People's chances of becoming more skilled are heavily dependent on their jobs, their earnings, the size of their employer, and how well they did at school. For example, someone with a degree is eight times more likely to receive job-related training than someone without any previous qualifications. The result is a vicious spiral which exacerbates inequality of opportunity.

The second challenge is to encourage learning that is lifelong. In the past, young people acquired skills that were expected to last them throughout their lives. Today, technological change means that much of what is learnt has a finite and shrinking life. People must continually acquire higher levels of knowledge, skills and understanding. It is absurd to assume that education starts at five and ends at 16, 18 or even 25.

Labour's measures to raise standards in schools will make school-leavers more able and willing to go into further education or training. The one-off windfall levy on the excess profits of the privatised utilities has featured prominently in the election campaign. How Labour will spend it has not. It will fund an ambitious programme to give 250,000 under-25s jobs and qualifications. But is learning a regular activity for so few people? Why do so many people do none at all? Why does almost everybody do less than they would like?

Answers lie in the obstinate barriers that people face; the leisure they have to give up, the distance they have to travel, the high cost of many courses, the poor quality of information and the confusing array of options. Some providers are finding innovative ways of knocking down these barriers, and there is clear evidence of the success of employee development schemes provided by companies such as Ford and Rover, in-work learning centres, and multimedia software and computer-based networks. But developments have been piecemeal.

Thirty years ago the Open University was established by Harold Wilson's Government. Since then it has awarded 160,000 degrees. Such institutions as the OU and Birkbeck College have made higher education available to people for whom it would have otherwise been impossible. Other universities are now responding better to the needs of part-time and mature students. The scale of change required for training is much greater. That is why Labour's University for Industry is so important.

The University for Industry will be open to everyone, providing new ways for them to develop their skills, gain qualifications at whatever level, improve their job prospects, and take control over their own learning programmes and careers. The university would bring together the best courses, materials, expertise and information, and make them available to vast numbers of new learners. Some will learn at work, others at home. But if the initiative is to have a big impact on those who are left out at present, it is vital that people have easy access to public locations. There should be a national network of local centres, in libraries, schools and high street outlets, offering equipment, learning packages, tutoring and guidance. This would allow the government to take a strategic approach to the long-term skill and knowledge needs of the workforce, and to commission new courses.

The university should also inspire greater demand for learning, which the evidence shows is higher than has been assumed and than is being met. Other ways of encouraging both individuals and employers will be needed. Companies with "Investors in People" status are much more likely to help their employees to develop their skills beyond those needed simply for the job. Labour will be promoting a rapid extension of this initiative among small firms. But with relationships between employers and employees weakening, and career patterns becoming more fractured, people should be helped to take greater responsibility for their own development. They will be able to do so through "Individual Learning Accounts", bringing together contributions from the individual, the employer, and where necessary the State. Labour will be kickstarting the scheme by putting £150 into each of a million accounts, using unspent money from Training and Enterprise Councils, for people in specific targeted groups, such as women returning to work or changing careers after a break, if they make a small investment of their own.

No government can guarantee that everyone will fulfil his or her potential. All governments should provide more vigorous leadership than the Conservatives have over the past 18 years. The government must promote a learning culture so that "eternal student" is never again a term of abuse.

Baroness Blackstone is a Labour spokesman in the Lords.



THE TIMES CHALLENGE

We call Major and Blair to a debate before our readers

Some time next year, the 1997 election campaign will be finally tidied away between hard covers. The journalists will become book-writers. The voters will become statisticians. What can we see now that will be worth remembering then? Will anything be left of this election once the chicken costumes are back in pantomime and Tatton is just another part of Cheshire? The immediate answer is a miserable one. The campaign is three weeks old now and by general assent has been a disappointing democratic show. It is slowing rather than quickening its pace. Few minds seem to have been moved. Too few minds have been engaged in the transformation of British politics that is the most likely outcome among both main political parties. There is a gap at the centre of this election season which must be filled. We are today inviting John Major and Tony Blair to fill that gap and accept this Times challenge to face each other in public and televised debate.

Yesterday, following discussions over several weeks, we asked the two men who aim to be Prime Minister in May to meet in central London on the evening of Sunday, April 20. We repeat that invitation before all Times readers now. The party advisers seem to show a general good will to take part. We have noted the many public statements of desire for debate from senior politicians on both sides. That general interest in participating needs quickly to be translated into the national interest in seeing the challengers face each other.

We recognise that others have sincerely tried to stage such a debate. Teams representing the main broadcasters came close to reaching agreement at the beginning of the campaign. We backed those talks and, at the time of their collapse, we much regretted the loss of trust and confidence that followed. Trivial recriminations — and a few days of stardom for a chicken — were a poor reward for hours of talks about talk.

At the same time we also recognised that the negotiations might fail. The campaign had at that time barely begun. Neither side knew whether or not some great issue or argument might take over the election, concentrate minds and render a debate unnecessary. First, Mr Major seemed reluctant; then Mr Blair seemed persuaded that safety-first was the best policy. The broadcasters had to deal both with the staging of the debate and the arguments of the smaller parties about their shares of broadcast time. There were widespread worries that, if a debate were called, the poll would become presidential and character-based to the exclusion of hard policy analysis. We, therefore, placed our own simple proposal before the parties with the simple request that it be considered if the time became ripe.

That ripe time is now. Even without the prospect of a debate to divert the campaigners' minds, the central issue has become one of trust and personal character. Voters have been asked to believe that the very soul of the Tory party has somehow been rehoused in Mr Blair. They have been asked to believe that Mr Major has a resolution under fire that has been underestimated in the past and will serve Britain powerfully in the future. Voters deserve to see these qualities tested directly before their eyes.

A SHARP GERMAN LESSON

Bombers and killers should not be engaged in dialogue

Europe's "critical dialogue" with Iran died in a Berlin courtroom yesterday. The long-awaited verdict in the so-called Mykonos trial made clear that the most senior figures in the Iranian Government were directly implicated in the assassination of Kurdish dissidents. Iran has been found guilty not only of sponsoring international terrorism, but of systematic deception of those European countries still attempting to maintain civilised relations with the Islamic republic. It has neither modified its unacceptable export of violence and revolution, nor justified the forbearance shown to it over the past five years.

The diplomatic reaction has been swift: Germany has recalled its ambassador from Tehran, Iranian officials have been expelled from Bonn and Germans have been told not to travel to Iran. To underline solidarity with Germany's actions, European Union ministers immediately agreed a sufficiently tough response to ensure that, for once, disapproving words are followed by sanctions that bite. The EU is to suspend its "critical dialogue" forthwith and recall all ambassadors from Tehran. This will be followed by a series of measures to hit Iran politically and materially. These will probably include the expulsion and permanent exclusion from any EU country of Iranian intelligence officials still resident in Europe, a cutting back of official visits, a toughening of visa restrictions and a formal restatement of a full arms embargo. Trade will be discouraged — though Europe is still unlikely to support the American calls for a full investment embargo.

Britain has long argued that Tehran's refusal to lift the fatwa on Salman Rushdie, and indeed the recent increase in the reward for his murder, was sufficient evidence that it was not serious in seeking better relations with the West. Britain, which has no full ambassador in Tehran, has already implemented most of the measures announced yesterday. For the past five years it has been lobbying its partners to ensure that the critical dialogue, agreed in 1992, was more critical and less of a dialogue.

Unless a debate is agreed within the next few days it seems unlikely that one will be agreed at all. Both sides should now step back to the table. If their spirits are unwilling, great clouds of complexity can be raised in order to obscure their preference not to face each other before the people. If they truly want to take part, there need be no real obstacle at all.

We propose a debate with adequate time for both men to amplify and extend their arguments. There is no point in a meeting if it merely allows more outlets for stock phrases that we have all heard before. We propose that only Mr Major and Mr Blair take part. They are the men who stand to be Prime Minister of this country. Theirs is the debate that voters want to hear. That is the debate that we wish to stage. We have discussed this plan with the broadcasters and would be surprised if they did not choose to attend the event and cover it to the very best of their ability.

The legal entitlements of the Liberal Democrats will be a matter for the broadcasters to consider along the lines that were already contemplated in the previous negotiations. Mr Ashdown has his moral and legal rights and knows them well. We expect that the broadcasters would match those rights. But we do not believe that this single evening, this one special part of the campaign, should include Mr Ashdown. Three debaters make bad debate; the voters of this country deserve good debate by the men who alone are set to lead them.

There will doubtless be other difficulties too. None of these problems should halt a debate organised by this newspaper. In the United States, which has a long experience of presidential and gubernatorial debates, the events are not normally organised by the same groups which broadcast them. There is a separation of roles which could usefully be followed here.

We offer *The Times* as the host of this debate. This newspaper has strong recent experience of staging large public events, from the last visit of Mikhail Gorbachev to the first major appearance by Salman Rushdie; Mr Blair has appeared at *Times* debates, as has Lady Thatcher. *The Times* has followed a policy of neutrality in covering this campaign which has won appreciation from politicians and supporters of both parties. Our readers, from whom we would invite the debate audience, have a political affiliation that is closest of all broadcast newspapers to that of the country as a whole.

This debate would be the first event of its kind in British political history. It would play a powerful role in concentrating the voters' minds on the men who want to lead them. It would allow voters to see their candidates under pressure from each other, without the intrusions of advisers, strategists and TV interviewers. We believe that both men would show themselves well; that Mr Blair might escape from the clinging bonds of caution and his paralysing cheek-and-jaw smile; that Mr Major too would come alive in a genuine battle about who was the toughest fighter and the leader most deserving of trust. If they refuse to show themselves at all, then we, our readers and all British voters will be entitled to draw conclusions from that too.

The problem has been Germany. Bonn has long believed that it had a special role to play as a bridge to an unpopular and isolated regime. The Germans, without the traditional links to other countries in the Middle East enjoyed by Britain and France, saw Iran as an area where they could give a diplomatic lead while themselves profiting from trade relations. They went out of their way to engage the Iranian Government in political talks, economic agreements and cultural exchanges. Ignoring the warnings from others, they were the main proponent of the thesis that President Rafsanjani was, at heart, a moderate and that pragmatists would gain the upper hand if Iran could show material benefit from better relations with the West. This even led to the invitation to the head of Iranian intelligence to visit Bonn and hold talks with Helmut Kohl's intelligence co-ordinator — to the consternation of Britain and America.

That policy has been shown to be a failure. Iran has continued to assassinate its opponents abroad, undermine the Middle East peace process, encourage Islamic extremists and set up bases of subversion in countries such as Sudan. There may, indeed, be a power struggle going on in the run-up to the coming Iranian presidential elections between modernisers, seeking more trade and Iran's return to the community of nations, and religious obscurantists who believe in a permanent *jihād* against the West. But there is little evidence that this struggle has moderated Iranian behaviour overseas.

Mr Rushdie has often accused Europe of cowardice in refusing to face up to the nature of Iran's regime and of trying to appease the mullahs. He has pointed out — rightly — the contradiction even in the stance of Britain, which has called for tougher action but is still officially sponsoring British exhibitors at Iranian trade fairs. Germany yesterday learnt, to its cost, that appeasing extremism does not pay. Perhaps all Europe will now understand that those who bomb and kill are not the kind of people who should be engaged in any dialogue, however critical.

Small businesses' support of Labour

From Mr Kenneth Spencer and others

Sir, We write as small business people who want success for our own companies and prosperity for the whole nation. The present Conservative Government has taken small firms for granted and has done too little to support us.

A small business has gone bust every three minutes of every working day since 1992: we have been hit by 11 tax increases, and red tape has grown three times faster than it has been cut. Mr Major's belated announcement earlier this week on business rates (report, April 9) will do too little to make up for what we have lost. This is why we and others have taken a fresh look at Labour.

Labour has a firm commitment to sound economic policies to deliver stability, low inflation and interest rates as low as possible. There will be no increase in the top rate of income tax. Labour's small business spokeswoman, Barbara Roche, has been willing to listen and to understand small businesses' concerns.

Labour will tackle late payment through its proposal to introduce a statutory right to interest. It is pledged to cut red tape and would, for the first time, make sure up to half the members of the Deregulation Taskforce represent small firms.

We believe that small businesses have nothing to fear from Labour's proposals to introduce a national minimum wage. Labour has made clear that it will be sensibly implemented, so that it does not harm competitiveness, and that small business will have a strong voice on the proposed Low Pay Commission.

We believe that small business can look forward with confidence to a profitable future with a Labour government.

Seventy-nine other leaders of small businesses have asked to be associated with these sentiments.

Yours etc,

KENNETH SPENCER
(Co-owner, Collective Enterprises Ltd, Glossop),
PAUL KALINAUCKAS
(Joint Managing Director, Escotel Group Ltd, Wolverhampton),
COLIN MUGE
(Director, Walden Export Services Ltd, Cambridge),
JOHN PAYNTER
(Owner, Sholing Press, Southampton),
RITA PHILLIPS
(Co-owner, Solent Diagnostics, Fareham),
Bleaklow House,
Howard Town Mill,
Glossop, Derbyshire,
April 10.

Labour questioned

From the Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Sir, Mr Robin Cook (letter, April 10) suggests that "anyone who thinks that Tony Blair is going to sell Britain out in Europe hasn't been paying attention to the last three years". On the contrary, we have been paying too much attention. That is why federalist European leaders welcome the prospect of a malleable Britain under a Labour government. That is why those worried about the fate of Britain in Europe should vote Conservative.

Labour's European agenda is instinctively integrationist and would damage Britain irrevocably. Cook himself admits that they would not "regard integration as a dirty word". Labour would make six surrenders in just six weeks if they were to sign the new EU Treaty next June. They would unconditionally surrender the British veto in four important areas: regional policy, industrial policy, social policy and environmental policy. They would surrender our social opt-out by signing up to the job-destroying social chapter, and back a new treaty chapter on employment, costing jobs not creating them.

Labour's latest side-step is yet another example of Labour preferring cover-up to combat. Labour are petrified of real debate in this election campaign. Mr Cook's admission on *Newsnight* last night that he would not share a platform with any fellow Labour MP on Europe says it all. Labour's approach to debate is to silence it. This may work for a power-hungry party at home but it cannot work abroad. Europe is not a soundbite politics. It is about fighting for British interests through tough negotiations month after month.

Labour are cracking already under the pressure of this election campaign: I dread to think how they would handle the pressure of an EU summit.

Yours,

DAVID DAVIS,
Conservative Central Office,
32 Smith Square, SW1,
April 10.

From Mr Raymond Garlick

Sir, Your leading article (April 9) says that Mr Blair "asked why, if even a parish council was allowed to raise revenue, it should be shocking that a Scottish parliament could do so too".

Is it not still more shocking that a proposed Welsh assembly should be denied — even in abeyance — the legal right of an English parish council?

Yours faithfully,
RAYMOND GARLICK,
26 Glannant Flats,
College Road, Carmarthen,
April 9.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

The costs and benefits of recycling what we throw away

From Mr Barry Sheerman, Parliamentary Candidate for Huddersfield (Labour)

Sir, Congratulations on your timely editorial of April 7, "Full cycle", and the report on recycling on the same day. The issues addressed are a perfect illustration of how short-term economic gains frequently override long-term environmental needs. Such issues need to be addressed in the run-up to the election.

There is no logic behind an economic structure which encourages the extraction of raw materials and their conversion to products, followed by their inevitable dumping as "waste". This linear system of resource-use clearly has no future and its global environmental impact raises serious doubts about our own economic structure.

Surely, the solution is an economic structure which ensures the efficient use of all resources, including renewable ones, by developing a cyclical system. Common sense dictates that we use our resources more efficiently through a process which recycles waste materials back into production and use. The introduction of a landfill tax last year, together with the "levy" on packaging which will follow the recently introduced regulations, are a start.

Effective sustainable waste management is crucial for both our economy and our environment. We must ensure the right balance is struck between sensible recycling policies, waste minimisation, energy from waste, incineration, landfill and other methods of waste use/disposal.

Yours sincerely,

BARRY SHEERMAN,
Watershead,
Norwood Green,
Halifax, West Yorkshire,
April 7.

From Miss Polly Simpson

Sir, How simplistic to compare recycling with landfill purely on the basis of cost. The challenge facing those of us who work in the waste industry, as I do, and have to deal with these complicated issues on a daily basis is to make good environmental policy good economic policy too.

It is relatively easy to find reasons for not recycling our waste, particu-

larly domestic waste; it can be expensive to collect, sort and transport to reprocessors. Unfortunately people are not queuing up to have landfill sites established in their neighbourhoods or rushing out to lobby their local MP for an incinerator.

In the UK we are lucky enough still to have plenty of landfill opportunities — unlike many of our European neighbours who have been forced to find alternative routes for their waste. Incineration, with the recovery of heat and energy, is considered preferable to landfill by even the most hardened environmentalist. It also offers, arguably, the most sensible recovery route for some materials. However, much of what we throw away, particularly in commercial operations, can and is easily, cheaply and effectively recycled. The same materials would be lost to us if landfilled, either before or after incineration.

The true costs of waste collection and disposal have been well disguised and hidden in the past, but this is getting harder. Landfill site operators are becoming fussy about what they will and will not accept for fear of future contamination; the law has been tightened up on the monitoring and control of pollution from landfill sites; incinerators up and down the country were decommissioned last year because they did not meet new controls on emissions; and the producers of packaging are going to have to pay for the recovery and recycling of their products from next year.

Recycling may not come cheap, but the alternatives are only just beginning to include the real costs to the environment in their price to the consumer. The sooner a fair comparison can be made between all the options the sooner we can choose between the true costs, both financial and environmental.

Yours faithfully,
POLLY SIMPSON,
443 London Road,
High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire,
April 7.

From the Editor of
Plastics in the Environment

Sir, The fact that suspending waste collection saves Washington \$2.5 million a year, as you report, simply shows that, as usual, the environment has not been factored into the account-

ing system and that the collection system wasn't a particularly good one.

Even in the US, where neither landfill sites nor unreconstructed market-worship are exactly in short supply, there is a well-developed, sustainable recycling industry, with very high levels of popular participation, even for plastics where scrap prices are indeed extremely low at the moment.

This is part of the business cycle. It happens in all areas of the economy without the future of whole industries being written off. The difference here is that a few extremists from industry are trying to use a difficult situation to stigmatise a perceived rival and to encourage us to believe that there is no problem and that we can simply go on consuming, discarding and letting the environment take the slack forever.

Well, we can't, and it is a pity that *The Times* suggests that we can. In doing so, you simply repeat the propaganda from one extreme of a highly complex issue.

Yours sincerely,

A. R. WARMINGTON,
Editor, *Plastics in the Environment*,
45 Briton Street, EC1,
April 8.

From Ms Danielle Byrne

Sir, Today I reused a copy of your newspaper which I had found discarded on a Northern Line train. It's not surprising therefore that I read with great interest your report and leading article on the "recycling myth".

Recycling is not a simple panacea for all waste-management ills. To treat it as such merely invites the simplistic objections made in your columns. We all now know that recycling is only one of many options for minimising waste, but it is a useful and economic one, nonetheless.

The newspaper in question is now at home, awaiting my decision on how to reuse or recycle it next. I don't feel inclined to hide it in a hole in the ground or burn it and landfill the ash. The cost to the next generation of cleaning up the resulting mess seems like poor economics to me.

Yours etc,
DANIELLE BYRNE,
22 Sheridan House,
Wincent Street, SE11,
April 7.

Hong Kong handover arrangements

From Mr Kerry McGlynn

Sir, Mr Dick Wilson claims (letter, April 3) — as does the Chinese Government — that the arrangements for Hong Kong's Legislative Council elections in 1995 were in contravention of earlier (British) agreements with China.

This is a completely hollow claim. All the legal experts who gave evidence on this very issue to the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Select Committee in 1994 testified that the electoral arrangements proposed by the Governor, Chris Patten, were fully consistent with the Joint Declaration, the Basic Law and past agreements and understandings reached between the British and Chinese Governments.

Indeed, recently the International Commission of Jurists has concluded that, in establishing a rubber-stamp provisional legislature, it is China which is in contravention of the Joint Declaration. At the same time the US Administration publicly described the establishment of the provisional legislature as "unwise, unnecessary and unjustified", and there were similar statements of dismay from officials and legislatures in other countries.

China has never tried to substantiate its claim that the present Legislative Council violates any agreements with Britain. If China actually believes Britain has breached any agreements, it should accept the Foreign Secretary's invitation to make a joint submission on the issue to the In-

ternational Court of Justice.

The Chinese Government has refused to do so. Objective observers will draw their own conclusions from that.

Yours sincerely,

KERRY MCGLYNN
(Press Secretary),
Government House,
Hong Kong,
April 8.

From Professor Victor Funnell

Sir, The possibility of handing over Hong Kong's democratic political structures to the Chinese was not sabotaged by the colonial government's extension of the franchise for the Legislative Council in 1995, as Mr Wilson suggests.

Any pretext would serve the Beijing regime to abolish genuinely representative institutions, political parties and of course the previously agreed Bill of Rights. The media, too, are to come under strict government control.

What else would one expect from the present leaders in Beijing? It is curious that some wish to blame Governor Patten for the well-known instincts and attitudes of the Chinese Communist Party.

Yours faithfully,
V. C. FUNNELL
(Visiting Professor, Foreign Affairs College, Beijing, 1995-96),
13 Woodland Way,
Fairlight, Hastings, East Sussex,
April 5.

Timely intervention

From Mr Barry Hymn

Sir, Like Nigel Lawson (article, April 7), I set about adjusting the time on a score or more of watches, clocks, videos, hi-fis, time switches and bedside radios. Not, however, my computer.

Since signing up for the Internet I have been intrigued by its ability, on being summoned, to reset my computer's internal clock. (This is just as well because, with my son away at university, I haven't a clue how to do it.) It usually says something like "PC

clock adjusted — it was two seconds slow" and the clock promptly jumps two seconds.

I was curious to know if it had the power to recognise British Summer Time. Sure enough, on the Sunday morning it declared: "PC clock adjusted — it was 3600 seconds slow."

If only I could plug the rest of the timepieces in the house into my computer.

Yours faithfully,
BARRY HYMAN,
4 Priory View,
Bushey Heath, Hertfordshire,
April 2.

Field sports workers

From Mr Bernard Selwyn

Sir, You report (April 3) that the Union of Country Sports Workers seeks to protect an estimated 150,000 jobs linked to field sports. This figure has been quoted previously on behalf of field sports interests.

Yet Hansard gives a reply (March 20, Written Answer, column 880) by James Paice, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Education and Employment, that a study produced for the Standing Conference on Countryside Sports estimates around 60,000 full-time jobs are directly dependent on all countryside sports and a further 30,000 indirectly.

While, of course, there are valid arguments for and against field sports regardless of the effect on employment, it would be helpful if there could be more precise estimates for particular sports and their local distribution if we are meant to be influenced by the figures.

Yours sincerely,
BERNARD SELWYN,
3 Hogarth Road, SWS,
April 7.

Sport letters, page 40

Letters should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be faxed to 0171-782-5046.

Church entry charges

From the Reverend Julian Barker

Sir, Now that a number of major church buildings charge an entrance fee for visitors, I suggest that the time has come for a card scheme.

People who contribute on a regular basis to their own parishes should be entitled to apply for a card which would give them entrance free of charge to all other church buildings. The application would have to be countersigned by the treasurer of their own church. The costs of the scheme could be covered by an administration charge, or by a small levy on those churches which charge entrance.

Those who already contribute heavily to the maintenance of the vast majority of our historic churches would feel that, as regular members, they had some small recognition of their generosity; and active churchpeople in a diocese could have free access to their own cathedral, to which they often contribute already through their parish share.

Such a scheme would reduce any sense of unfairness arising from the fact that those who worship in buildings which make a charge still have free entrance to all the others. It would also encourage the feeling that involvement in your own parish gives you a place in the whole Church; and it might even have a marginal effect in encouraging people to give on a regular basis.

Yours faithfully,
JULIAN BARKER,
Repton Vicarage,
Derbyshire DE65 6FH.

Masonic membership

From Mr Alasdair A. K. White

Sir, Mr Nicholas Page (letter, April 10) asks why, if Freemasonry is not a secret society, Masonic lodges cannot publish membership lists.

The Institute of Directors' policy is not to publish a membership list — does that make it a secret society? Should businessmen be forced to declare their membership of the IoD before being appointed to run a company? Would membership of the IoD preclude one from being an MP, a judge or a policeman?

Yours faithfully,
ALASDAIR WHITE,
Waversteintweg 137,
B-1560 Hoeilaart, Belgium,
April 10.

Still no solution

From Mr Andrew Bradford

Sir, The female orgasm pill (report, April 8), even if it were to be combined with paracetamol to prevent headaches, is all very well but it still won't mow the lawn.

Yours faithfully,
ANDREW BRADFORD,
Kincardine,
Kincardine O'Neil,
Aberdeenshire,
April 8.



COURT CIRCULAR

WINDSOR CASTLE
April 10: The Queen, Lord High Admiral, took the Lord High Admiral's Divisions at Britannia Royal Naval College, Dartmouth, this morning.

Her Majesty arrived at Tones Station and was received by Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Devon (Lieutenant-Colonel the Earl of Morley) and the Mayor of Totnes (Councillor William Bennett).

The Queen drove to Britannia Royal Naval College and was received by the Second Sea Lord and Commander-in-Chief Naval Home Command (Admiral Sir Michael Boyce), the Commodore of the College (Commodore Philip Masterson-Smith RN) and the Mayor of Dartmouth (Councillor Margaret Roberts).

The Parade received Her Majesty with a Royal Salute and the Queen inspected the Parade.

Her Majesty addressed the Parade and subsequently presented the Queen's Sword and binoculars.

Her Majesty afterwards attended a Luncheon with the Commodore and Officers of the College in the Senior Gunroom.

The Duke of Edinburgh this morning visited the Royal Naval School and Garter House for Disabled Sailors, Soldiers and Airmen, Richmond, Surrey.

His Royal Highness, President, this afternoon chaired a meeting of the Royal Mint Advisory Committee at Buckingham Palace.

The Duke of Edinburgh, Patron, this evening attended the Institution of Chemical Engineers' Annual Dinner at the London Hilton, Park Lane, London W1.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE
April 10: The Prince Edward, Patron, this evening attended a Concert given by the London Mozart Players in the Queen Elizabeth Hall, South Bank Centre, London SE1.

ST JAMES'S PALACE
April 10: The Prince of Wales today visited the Orkney Islands and was received by Her Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Orkney (Mr George Marwick).

His Royal Highness this morning visited St Magnus Cathedral, Kirkwall.

The Prince of Wales this afternoon attended a Luncheon at the new community school in Orkney and met members of the local community.

His Royal Highness later visited the Scaup Flow Visitors' Centre at the former World War II Naval Base, Lybess, Hoy.

The Prince of Wales afterwards visited South Ronaldsay and met members of the local community.

YORK HOUSE
April 10: The Duchess of Kent, Deputy Colonel-in-Chief, the Royal Logistic Corps and the Adjutant General's Corps, this afternoon visited Princess Royal Barracks, Göttersloh, Germany.

Mrs Julian Tomkins was in attendance.

Today's royal engagements

The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh will give tea to the Vestry of Trinity Church, Wall Street, at Windsor Castle.

The Princess Royal, as President, Riding for the Disabled, will visit Angus Riding for the Disabled Group to open the St Albans Centre, Inverarity, Forfar, at 10.30 and will open the new Sheriff Court, West Bell Street, Dundee, at 12.30.

As President, Save the Children Fund, will visit a shop, in High Street, Arbroath, Angus, at 2.10.

The Princess Margaret will attend a luncheon to mark World Parkinson's Disease Day at Lancaster House, St James's, at 1.05.

The Duke of Kent, as Vice-Chairman, the British Overseas Trade Board, will meet Madame Wu Wenying, Chairman of the China National Textile Council, Kingsgate House, Victoria Street, SW1, at noon.

Memorial service

Professor Wilfrid Hogarth Dowdeswell
A service of thanksgiving for the life of Professor Wilfrid Hogarth Dowdeswell, Emeritus Professor, University of Bath, was held on Tuesday, April 8, in Bath Abbey, Canon Mervyn Drewett officiated, assisted by the Rev Graham Forde-Jones and the Rev Charles Roberts. Mrs Alison Robbins, elder daughter, and Mr Colin Dowdeswell, son, gave readings. Mr David T. Jones, Professor Peter Kelly and Mr Nicholas Thomas paid tribute.

Dinner

Company of Chartered Architects
The Lord Mayor, accompanied by the Sheriffs, attended the annual dinner of the Company of Chartered Architects last night at the Mansion House.

Mrs Sylvia Reid, Master, Mr Julian Ryder Richardson, Upper Warden, Mr John Penon, Renter Warden, and Professor Peter Dale, Junior Warden, received the guests. The Master presided. The Lord Mayor, the Upper Warden and Miss Christabel Albery, Director of the London Film Commission, also spoke.

Lectures

Royal Society
Professor A. R. Hunter, FRS, Professor of the Salk Institute, La Jolla, United States, yesterday delivered the Croonian lecture to the Royal Society.

Sir Aaron Klug, OM, President of the Royal Society, was in the chair.

Foundation for Science and Technology
The Lord Butterworth, CBE, DL, presided at a Foundation lecture and dinner discussion held at the Royal Society on Tuesday, April 8, 1997. Professor Richard Susskind, Mr Vernon Ellis and Sir Brian Jenkins spoke on 'The City - Its Role in the World of Virtual Financial Markets'. The evening was sponsored by Andersen Consulting.

Birthdays today

Miss Janet Allen, former Headmistress, Benenden School, 61; Viscount Buckmaster, 76; Mr Joseph Burnett-Stuart, former chairman, Robert Fleming Holdings, 67; Sir Raymond C. Gifford, former Warden, St Antony's College, Oxford, 78; Mr Gervase de Peyer, clarinetist, 71; Sir Oscar De Ville, former chairman, Meyer International, 72; Mr Clive Exton, scriptwriter and playwright, 67;

Mr James Alan Ferman, secretary, British Board of Film Classification, 67; Mr Michael Hindley, MEP, 50; Dr R.J.B. Knight, deputy director, National Maritime Museum, 67; Sir David L. Jones, former chairman, Aston University, 50;

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Charlotte Horton, 11, Scott Higgs, 12, Daniel Wood, also 12, and Michelle Liddiard, 11, all pupils from Oakfield School, Walcot, Swindon, sort through the scrapstore to find useful objects

Making the most of a load of rubbish

By JOHN YOUNG

THE storeroom next to a school on the outskirts of Swindon, Wiltshire, is not exactly a treasure house. But its shelves are stacked with mundane items like egg boxes, plastic bottles and cartons, coloured paper and outdated desk diaries, coathangers, reels of clingfilm and tin foil, sheets of polystyrene, box files, rugs and carpets. The only slightly unusual items is a collection of empty violin cases.

The sheer amount of material is a reminder that, despite generally greater environmental awareness, we are still a needlessly wasteful society. Recycling may have been partly discredited, at least from an economic point of view, but much of what we throw away can still be utilised or adapted for other purposes.

That is demonstrated by the large numbers of schools, community groups and voluntary societies who pay a small subscription and whose members visit the storeroom each week in search of cheap or free materials for various projects. Chris Fisher, who helps to run the scrapstore, was a customer when she ran a Sunday school and a Brownie pack.

Swindon Children's Scrapstore was started 12 years ago by Friends of the Earth with support from Thamesdown (now Swindon) council and a grant from Allied Dunbar. It was initially managed as part of a Manpower Services Commission programme, but since the programme was abolished it has been run entirely by volunteers.

As well as promoting reuse and recycling to reduce the environmental impact of waste disposal, the project also helps to stimulate creativity in children in the use of the materials. A weekly collection service is operated by a van supplied by the council with a volunteer driver, and an increasing number of local businesses take part in the scheme.

"Funding is, of course, a perennial problem," Anne Billingham, the project secretary, says. "Ideally we would like to move to industrial premises and employ more staff." She concedes that if business and industry eventually become less profligate in their attitude to waste, supplies will become scarcer. But that situation is still far off. "At the moment we are only seeing the tip of the iceberg."

Far too much stuff is still going into skips which should be coming here. Swindon Children's Scrapstore is among the entries for the 1996 Community Enterprise Awards, organised by Business in the Community and sponsored by The Times and DeLotto-Touché. The winning entries will be announced shortly.



Japanese keep royal tombs shut

By NORMAN HAMMOND, ARCHAEOLOGY CORRESPONDENT

RESISTANCE from Japanese imperial household officials is impeding research into the country's history and archaeology, according to a leading scholar there. Although the Emperor Hirohito disclaimed a divine ancestry and his own status as a living god in 1946, the Imperial Household Agency has refused to allow investigation of burial mounds that might document the real origins of Japanese monarchy.

The agency currently supervises more than 800 graves, including those designated as the mausoleums of emperors back to Jimmu, conqueror of much of Japan in the 4th century. Jimmu is now widely thought to be a mythical ancestor, and the whole question of Japanese imperial origins is being questioned in a manner unthinkable only a few years ago.

Archaeologists believe that the ancestors of most modern Japanese came from Korea 1,500 years ago: given the sensitive nature of Korean-Japanese relationships, there is official resistance to establishing the truth too clearly.

Some of the tombs officially designated as imperial are nothing of the sort, but only archaeological investigations can determine the dates and, perhaps, the owners. "There is widespread dissatisfaction with the Imperial Household Agency's continued treatment of mounds as imperial tombs when the designation can clearly be shown to be wrong," Professor Walter Edwards of Trent University in Nara says.

Tombs spanning the 3rd to 7th centuries AD are the vital sites for documenting the beginning of Japanese civilisation. Professor Edwards

argues, although only 36 of the largest among 4,000 known "keyhole-shaped mounds" are formally designated as imperial or family sepulchres.

"Debate will no doubt turn on conflicting views of the emperor's private rights as an individual, versus public obligations incumbent upon the imperial house as a state-supported institution."

Some 25 years ago, the Imperial Household Agency asked "where we find people who delight in having their ancestors' graves exposed", when the question of studying Japanese origins was debated in the Diet. Now the core of the argument has shifted from the sacred origins of the imperial line to secular claims about rights and obligations in modern Japanese society. Source: *Archaeology* Vol 30 No 2: 32-42.

Archibald McIndoe, plastic surgeon, London, 1900; Josephine Baker, singer, Paris, 1975; Enver Hoxha, Albanian leader 1944-85; Napoleon abdicated and was banished to Elba, 1814.

BMDS: 0171 680 6880
PRIVATE: 0171 481 4000

Keep strictly to the true gospel, avoiding empty and tedious chatter, those who believe in it will stay further and further to god. See page 2. Timothy 2: 15:16

BIRTHS
ALBERGHI - On April 5th at The Portland Hospital, to Valérie and Gianluca, a son, Valerio, a brother for Valerio.

BEADLE - On April 2nd 1997 at Queen Charlotte's Hospital, to Susan and John, a son, Ryan Thomas.

BRADFORD - On April 5th at The Portland Hospital, to David and Catherine, a son, David.

BURSELL - On April 6th 1997 at Charing Cross, to David and Jane, a son, David.

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CRISPWELL - On April 1st 1997, to Robert and Susan, a son, Robert.

HOWELL - On April 7th 1997, to Elizabeth and David, a son, David.

KERRISON - On March 24th at The Portland Hospital, to Ashleigh and John, a son, John.

LARSEN - On April 6th 1997, to Belinda and John, a son, John.

MILLER - Catherine Jane (nee Riddison) and Andrew are proud to announce the birth of their daughter Hannah Lilian on Sunday 6th April 1997.

MYNOR - On March 29th 1997 in Cardiff, to Debbie (nee Caplan) and Nick, a son, Samuel Philip.

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Gray's Inn

The Treasurer of Gray's Inn, Judge Eyr Lewis, QC, represented the Inn at the memorial meeting for Mr Michael Saunders on Tuesday.

Anniversaries

BIRTHS: Sir John Eliot, parliamentarian, St Germans, Cornwall, 1592; George Canning, Prime Minister 1827, London, 1770; Sir Charles Hallé, pianist, conductor and founder of the orchestra that bears his name, Hagen, Germany, 1819.

DEATHS: Llewellyn ap Iorwerth, Prince of Wales, Abercromby, 1240; Sir Gerald du Maurier, actor-manager, London, 1934; Sir

Archibald McIndoe, plastic surgeon, London, 1900; Josephine Baker, singer, Paris, 1975; Enver Hoxha, Albanian leader 1944-85; Napoleon abdicated and was banished to Elba, 1814.

PERSONAL COLUMN

TRADE: 0171 481 1982
FAX: 0171 481 9313

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OBITUARIES

Helene Hanff, writer, died in New York on April 9 aged 80. She was born on April 15, 1916.

Helene Hanff made her name with one book, *84 Charing Cross Road* (1971). Few writers have sailed to fame in so slender a craft. Its 90 pages were lavishly spaced. Strictly speaking half the book was not hers. But she was its only begueter. Her spirit gave it life. She changed the spirit of everyone else concerned.

Without her exuberance and generosity nothing would have been heard of this correspondence between an American reader and writer of television scripts and a second-hand London bookshop. She ended by being fêted, and seeing her long-distance love affair with Marks & Co enacted on the West End stage, then on television and on film. The film version, especially, in which Hanff and her bookselling correspondent were played by Anne Bancroft and Anthony Hopkins, ensured that both she and the bookshop became household names.

"I tell you," Hanff later wrote, "life is extraordinary. A few years ago I couldn't write anything or sell anything. I'd had my best chance and done my best and failed. And how was I to know the miracle waiting to happen around the corner in late middle age? *Eighty-four Charing Cross Road* was my bestseller, you understand, it didn't make me rich or famous. It just got me hundreds of letters and phonecalls from people I never knew existed; it got me wonderful reviews; it restored a self-confidence and self-esteem I'd lost somewhere along the way. God knows how many years ago. It brought me to England. It changed my life."

Helene Hanff was born in Philadelphia. Her father was a shirt salesman who had been



a song and dance man. From early years she wanted to be a writer. Her formal education was minimal. But her local public library had Quiller-Couch's essays. They formed her taste and inspired what became a passion for English literature. She also learnt Latin.

An itinerant, rather Bohemian life, which included a job on a diesel engine and being secretary to a dance band leader, landed her in New York at the age of 20. She won a playwriting contest. None of her thirty or so efforts was staged. She did better with television scripts, and wrote a series of eight for US Army training films. She graduated to *Harpers and The New Yorker*.

An advertisement by Marks & Co, the Charing Cross Road booksellers, in the *Saturday Review of Literature* in Octo-

ber 1949, prompted her to send them a list of books she was ready to buy "for no more than \$5.00 each". Thus began a twenty-year romance. Yet she never saw the shop until it had finally been closed and scheduled for demolition. By then she had made sure its name would linger as well as her own.

Marks & Co (the Co stood for Cohen, Marks's partner) was not quite the leisurely Dickensian concern Hanff had imagined. The writer Leo Marks, son of the proprietor, recalled the family business as an altogether more cut-throat affair. "My father never read a book he sold, but he knew their value."

Antiquarian bookselling in postwar London was characterised by vicious rivalry. Leo Marks explained. Sharp practice was rife. The fourth floor of 84 Charing Cross Road, for



Helene Hanff photographed outside 84 Charing Cross Road in 1987, when the site was occupied by a record shop

instance, housed a secret department known as "Spare Parts". "If a book came in, because it had a plate missing, they'd find a similar plate, shove it in, and sell it as a perfect copy. It was a very specialised part of the business," Hanff had written about a shop that never existed, and one that Marks Senior would not have wanted to run if it had. None of which was to stop her and Leo Marks from becoming the best of friends.

Hanff's long correspondence with Frank Doel, the manager of the shop, began conventionally enough. "Dear Madam," wrote Doel. "We have received your letter of October 5th." "I hope 'madam' doesn't mean over there what it means over here," Hanff replied. She kept up the caustic wisecracks as the relationship developed, abandoning the niceties for directness and capital letters: "Frankie, it's going to be a long cold

winter... AND I NEED READING MATTER." She never met Doel, who died before she made it to London. Like the shop where he worked, he was not quite as she had imagined. "If I had met Frank," she later said, "I probably wouldn't have written the book. Friends of mine who visited the bookshop and met him said I wouldn't have had anything in common with him. He was interested in the monetary value of books,

while I bought them for the literature." Her own book was given a fair wind when some of it was published in *Reader's Digest*. This alerted English book lovers to something new, amusing, engaging and poignant. At the same time, with its talk of powdered egg and nylon stockings, it recalled an era through which many of them had just lived; its comedy and eventual tragedy won their hearts. So did the fact

that here was an impeccable, rollicking American woman who wanted to read *Hadrian, Catullus, Donne, Pepys, Lardner and the Vulgate*. When she at last managed to come to London in the wake of her book she found herself famous.

Her love affair was with London also. She described her enthusiastic welcome and adventures as a visitor in *The Duchess of Bloomsbury Street* (1976). That book, she later thought "sounded like a parody of every gushing tourist", but it, too, was warmly received. Six years later, in *Apple of My Eye*, she portrayed New York. Once again there was gusto: but this time no magic.

It would be wrong nonetheless to describe Helene Hanff as a "one book author". Her triumph was one not of literature but of character. This gained her an even wider circle of English friends when she became a regular broadcaster for the BBC in later years. Between 1978 and 1984, she entertained listeners to Radio 4's *Woman's Hour* with a quirky, gently humorous view of New York life as seen from her one-room apartment. A collection of those monthly five-minute talks was published in 1992 as *Letter from New York*.

To the end Hanff clung to her Anglophilia, though she found it severely tested on some of her visits to London. "It has become so xenophobic," she told one interviewer. "It's startling that a city so old and so sophisticated should be so afraid of outsiders." The site at 84 Charing Cross Road fell victim to property developers, though its fame was such that one of its later occupants, Covent Garden Records, was able to do a profitable sideline selling books. An admirer sent Hanff the old shop sign. Helene Hanff never married. "I always craved to be home alone," she said.

GEOFFREY KNIGHT

Geoffrey Knight, CBE, executive manager of the Anglo-French Concorde team, died on March 31 aged 76. He was born on January 25, 1921.



IN HIS book *Concorde - The Inside Story*, published in 1976 when British Airways and Air France launched the world's first supersonic commercial air services, Geoffrey Knight provided a forthright, laconic and revealing account of the complexities of the task which led to the creation of this remarkable aircraft. As executive manager of the Anglo-French team he exercised immense patience, commercial skill and acumen, as well as an urbane good humour, which was invaluable in the minefield of technical (and diplomatic) problems which were inherent in the project.

It was largely thanks to him, too, that the Bristol Britannia and the BAC One Eleven airliners achieved so many years of successful operation. Born in Fareham, Hampshire, Geoffrey Egerton

Knight was educated at Brighton College before joining the Royal Marines in 1939. He served in home, Mediterranean and Far East theatres throughout the war - including the D-Day landings in Normandy. He then read for the Bar before joining the aircraft division of Bristol in 1953.

When Bristol Aircraft was formed, two years later, he became its commercial direc-

tor, primarily concerned with the sales and delivery of the four-engined Britannia to BOAC, to the RAF and to the export market. His experience with prospective orders for this advanced turbo-prop airliner in the United States and South America stood him in good stead in later negotiations, notably for the BAC One Eleven.

Knight went on to become commercial manager of the newly formed British Aircraft Corporation (BAC) at Brooklands, Weybridge, in 1960. From 1964 he was a board member and director of the corporation's civil aircraft sales. From 1969 to 1971 he was chairman of BAC's Filton, Bristol, division and a director of BAC (Australia) and BAC (USA).

He was closely involved with the development of the Vickers/BAC VC-10 long-range transport (which made its first flight on June 23, 1962), for BOAC and the RAF and played a similar role with the BAC One Eleven regional jet. In 1963 he negotiated a major

dollar-earning contract with American Airlines in the USA for the supply of 31 One Elevens for domestic air services in the United States.

At the same time, he was leading the Anglo-French executive team on Concorde - a task which involved him in the most detailed and delicate negotiations with representatives - technical and political - of both governments. His skill and tact were recognised by his appointment as CBE in 1970.

When British Aerospace was formed in 1976 Knight joined the Board of Guinness Peat and set up its successful aviation division. He became chairman of its Fenchurch Insurance Group in 1980, a non executive board member of Trafalgar House in 1983, and chairman of Guinness Peat in 1989. In a more leisurely field, he was chairman of Boodles and a member of White's and the Turf clubs. Geoffrey Knight married Evelyn Dollar Bugle in 1947. She survives him with their two daughters.

NORMAN PIRIE

Norman Pirie, virologist and nutritionist, died on March 29 aged 89. He was born on July 1, 1907.

A SCIENTIST of modest demeanour and strong social conscience, Norman Pirie never stopped working. Long after his official retirement from Rothamsted Experimental Station he retained a room there, and was busy until the day before he died.

Born in Torrance, in Stirlingshire, Norman Wingate Pirie - invariably known as Bill - was the son of the portrait painter Sir George Pirie. He was educated at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, and established himself as a biochemist and virologist in the 1930s.

His most striking discovery, made with Frederick Bawden, was to show that the genetic material of viruses is ribonucleic acid (RNA). In 1935 the American biochemist Wendell Stanley had grown crystals of tobacco mosaic virus, believing that they consisted entirely of protein. Pirie was unconvinced, and with Bawden established that the purified virus contained phosphorus. Since no amino acid contains phosphorus, and proteins consist exclusively of amino acids, it was clear that something else was present. Together they concluded that it was RNA, at a time when the nucleic acids had yet to become the central players in the genetic revolution.

Pirie might easily have gone on to become one of the leaders of the unfolding science of molecular biology. Stanley won a share in the 1946 Nobel Prize for his discovery, and Pirie might have done the same, but by then he had moved in an entirely different direction. Always left-wing in politics, he believed that the justification for

research was the improvement of the conditions of life. In 1939 he suggested that the proteins extracted from the leaves of plants could be used to bolster the diet, and improve the lot of the poor. Then, as remains the case today, the vast bulk of such proteins are wasted, unless they are used to feed animals.

On the outbreak of war he was asked by the Government to devise simple machines to extract the proteins and make them palatable. In 1940 he joined Bawden at Rothamsted, and the leaf protein project became the central focus of his research. By the 1960s he was aiming his machines at the Third World, where a food crisis was believed to be developing. In the event, conventional food production proved well able to keep up with growing populations, and Pirie's leaf protein never became established, but it was not for lack of effort.

Pirie enlisted chefs and local

Harpden housewives to turn his chunks of leaf protein into tasty dishes. Apple, onion and mustard-leaf protein pie, vegetable hot-pot with wheat leaf protein, and lentil soup with barley leaf protein were among the dishes they dreamt up. The first week, he admitted dryly, cooks tended to be "suicidal, homicidal, tearful or mutinous" but in the second they all became reconciled to the unfamiliar material. Ravioli and haggis were among the improbable results of their efforts.

Machines for extracting leaf protein were exported to India, Uganda, and New Guinea. But Pirie was not the only pioneer to find that dietary habits die hard. Only the pressure of hunger could have persuaded millions to start eating leaves, however appetisingly presented, and the Green Revolution had anyway made it unnecessary. Its time, though, may still come - if Malthusian prophecies even-

tually prove to be true. In 1971 Pirie won the Royal Society's Copley Medal, and in 1976 the first Rank-Hevis award for nutrition. In retirement an amniotic resulting from this award provided him with a personal laboratory at Rothamsted to continue his work. There remained a feeling, however, that a more conventional career path might have brought greater rewards, even judged by Pirie's socialist standards.

With his wife Antoinette, a fellow scientist who became an ophthalmologist, Pirie was heavily involved with the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament from its beginnings. He chaired the scientific committee of CND for several years, and contributed to books on the threat of nuclear weapons. He also wrote books on more general themes such as the origins of life and population control.

His wife died in 1991. His son and daughter survive him.



Norman Pirie (right) offers visitors a sample of his leaf protein biscuits

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BRITISH INSTITUTION.

A large historical painting, by that veteran professor of the arts, Mr. West, is now placed in the Gallery of that meritorious establishment the British Institution, in Pall Mall. The subject of the piece is "Christ, healing the sick". The scene is laid in a Colonnade of the Temple. The Saviour appears towards the left, accompanied by St. John, St. Peter, and others of his disciples. There are three distinct groups of sufferers, and their friends and attendants; and the background has, to the right, a view of a distant altar, and to the left, various spectators, with a remote perspective of part of the sacred edifice. The chief group in the centre consists of a man in advanced years, and in the last stage of wasting illness, carried in a chair, and almost lifeless, by two slaves, and attended by sympathising friends. To the left, is the affecting appearance of a young woman, born blind; a mother, with her sick and dying infant; a man in hopeless imbecility of mind, and other lamentable objects. In the right group, the chief object is a woman, who seems afflicted past remedy, supported by two soldiers; her son, advanced before her, with his arms outstretched, as if to call the quickest attention of the Saviour of mankind to the critical situation of his distressed mother. The design is of that

ON THIS DAY

April 11, 1817

American-born Benjamin West settled in London, enjoyed royal patronage, and 30 years later, in 1812, became President of the Royal Academy. Chambers' Biographical Dictionary takes a more restrained view of his talent: "His drawing is correct and his composition skillful, though the colouring is monotonous."

description, which only genius and long experience can be expected to produce. The grouping is peculiarly excellent. In the expression of character the artist has been eminently successful. The principal figures possess the highest merit. Exhausted nature, departing age, and premature mortality, are depicted with transcendent talents. The person of the Saviour is represented with most exquisite beauty. He wears a robe of celestial blue over a red tunic. The face is the finest that can be imagined; beaming with heavenly grace. There is an excellent idea of the painter's, to give to the expression of the

countenance the character of the "divine". Though all the others in the composition have their eyes fixed on their holy benefactor, or on the objects of his goodness, his eyes are directed to no particular person or object. Thus, the character of his benevolence and beneficence to all, is expressed with the most happy propriety, and the most impressive and edifying effect. The colouring is of that sober, well-mixed kind, which, while it loses nothing from a want of variety, offends in no instance by gaudiness or obtrusive glare; but preserves a chaste, yet warm, rich, and dignified effect. The ceiling-lights have been partially darkened - the room lined with green and purple drapery, placed above the frame of the picture, to put it into the best point of view. This notice we gladly take of so noble a production of British art, in which such genius, skill and knowledge have been combined to enrich the canvas with this representation of human misery in many of its most afflicting forms, waiting the speedy relief of Divine Mercy. Mr. West has already done himself sufficient honour by many great works. Perhaps, though we do not pledge ourselves to this, the present is his masterpiece, and seems to have brought forth most appropriately, the full harvest of his talents in the rich autumn of his professional life.

NEWS

Tories flout party line on EMU

■ Dozens of Tory candidates, including at least one minister, have flouted the Government's wait-and-see policy on a single currency in their constituency election manifestos.

Many are taking advantage of a millionaire businessman's offer of financial support to any candidate who opposes a single currency. It is thought that about 150 Tories will receive donations from Paul Sykes, 53, who said: "It is going to cost me around £500,000. But it's worth it"..... Pages 1, 11-17, 12, 20, 21

Times challenge to TV debate

■ The Times is issuing a new challenge to John Major and Tony Blair to take part in a televised general election debate. The Editor has written to both the leaders' camps inviting them to a debate hosted by the newspaper and open to the television companies in London on Sunday April 20..... Pages 1, 21

EU envoys recalled

The EU recalled all its ambassadors in Tehran, hours after a Berlin court verdict implicated Iranian Government officials in the murder in a cafe of Kurdish exiles..... Pages 1, 8, 21

Labour blocks school

A Roman Catholic independent girls' school hoping to join the state system failed to win approval from David Blunkett, Shadow Education Secretary, to become grant-maintained..... Page 2

Colonel threatened

The former British Army colonel whose team of 65 mercenaries was hired by the Papua New Guinea Government told of death threats from an element of the country's defence force..... Page 4

Deer hunting ban

The National Trust banned deer hunting on its land in a move that is certain to intensify demands for abolishing all hunting with dogs, including fox hunting..... Page 4

Poison from the pew

A vicar blamed his heart complaint on a mystery woman who has mounted a three-year hate letter campaign against him from the pews..... Page 5

Flying the flag

A stained Union Jack, frayed by fierce Antarctic winds, was sold for £20,500 at Christie's. It was taken by Sir Ernest Shackleton on his 1907-1909 expedition..... Page 6

Air patrol to spot illegal sprinklers

■ As temperatures in Britain reached the 70s the prospect of the year's first hosepipe bans emerged. After the driest two years for more than two centuries Essex and Suffolk Water has consulted the Government about introducing bans. Mid Kent Water is to use a spotter plane to detect illegally filled swimming pools and unlicensed sprinklers..... Pages 1, 2

BUSINESS

Initiative: Labour will today set out new plans to revitalise the private finance initiative in the first concrete indication of closer public and private partnership under a Labour government..... Page 25

Utilities: Shares in utilities rose as City dealers pounced on apparent indecision by Labour over how to levy windfall taxes..... Page 25

Regional gloom: House prices in many parts of Britain fell in the first quarter of this year, a Halifax survey shows..... Page 25

Markets: The FT-SE 100 index rose 20.9 points to close at 4313.2. Sterling's trade-weighted index fell from 99.4 to 99.3 after a fall from \$1.6228 to \$1.6240 and from DM2.7909 to DM2.7873..... Page 28

EBRD: The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development faces a deepening succession crisis ahead of its annual meeting of shareholders in London this weekend..... Page 26

Football: Manchester United are planning an appeal to the FA after the Premier League dismissed their request to ease fixture congestion by extending the season..... Page 48

Golf: Cold temperatures and swirling breezes, coupled with firm and fast greens, made the going difficult in the first round of the Masters in Augusta..... Page 48

Motor racing: British American Tobacco is behind moves to establish a Formula One team that could make its debut next year, with Jacques Villeneuve joining in 1999..... Page 43

Racing: Stewards will exchange bowler hats for riding helmets at Wolverhampton when they compete in a special race as part of the course's first Sunday fixture on May 11..... Page 41



Kees Van Dongen's *Femme au Grand Chapeau*, from the collection of Charles Tabachnick, to be sold by Sotheby's

TOMORROW

IN THE TIMES

■ **MAGAZINE**
Matt Le Blanc of *Friends* models for a 32-page special on men's summer fashions

■ **CAR 97**
The heavyweight that America's Don King gave to England's Frank Warren

ARTS

Birth of the blue: Picasso's early works in a stunning exhibition in Washington DC reveal his progression from imitation to the Blue Period, to the Rose..... Page 33

Here comes Baz: His *Silk Degrees* album sold five million copies in the States alone in the Seventies; then Baz Scaggs went into voluntary exile for 20 years. Now he's back..... Page 34

No hurry: Despite the obvious care lavished on the new Depeche Mode album, there is a weary feel to it, says David Sinclair..... Page 35

Fully Mark's: For £240 you can buy the facsimile edition of the complete works of Mark Twain, and marvel anew at his "renegade tongue"..... Page 36

FEATURES

73 not out: Valerie Grove talks to Ida Staples, who became *University Challenge*'s oldest competitor when she appeared on the quiz at the age of 73..... Page 18

Committed: When I was 18, the greatest crime was to be uncool; now that I am a mother, the greatest crime is not to pull one's weight, to allow others to be active. Rachel Morris on why she joined a committee..... Page 18

McManners: They are being called the McManners Generation. Americans prepared to pay to be taught etiquette. Quentin Letts reports on Gloria Petersen, the guru whose seminars are designed to charm a nation..... Page 19

EDUCATION

Child choice: In an age of calls for traditional values, Summerhill School is sticking to the liberal ideas it pioneered at its foundation more than 70 years ago..... Page 38

Booked out: Susan Elkin bemoans schools that seem to think children can benefit from studying a Disney film version of classics such as *The Jungle Book* rather than Kipling's actual writings..... Page 38

THE PAPERS

Crime rates are falling sharply in New York City, thanks in large part to better policing, but this fine record is stained by a continuing fear of police brutality in black and Hispanic neighbourhoods. New York police officers have shot and killed more than 100 civilians over the past five years, and while those numbers are far below the total of fatal shootings in the early 1970s, the vast majority of the shootings were of African-Americans and Hispanics..... *The New York Times*

Preview: A stand-up routine gets its television premiere. *Eddie Izzard - Unrepeatable* (Channel 4, 10.30pm). Review: Matthew Bond thinks that Mrs Merton is not the woman she was..... Pages 46, 47

The Times challenge

There is a gap at the centre of this election season which must be filled. We are today inviting John Major and Tony Blair to fill that gap and accept this Times challenge to face each other in public and televised debate..... Page 21

A German lesson

Germany yesterday learnt, to its cost, that appeasing extremism does not pay. Perhaps all Europe will now understand that those who bomb and kill are not the kind of people who should be engaged in any dialogue..... Page 21

MATTHEW PARRIS

Now the caballists simply worship the whip. Within the party and in their dealings with the press, they have become an anti-intellectual force, trying to close off or close down all questioning. Convinced that they are the architects of Mr Blair's ascendancy, they have convinced him that they must be the guardians of it..... Page 20

TESSA BLACKSTONE

There should be a national network of local centres, in libraries, schools and high street outlets, offering equipment, learning packages, tutoring and guidance. This would allow the Government to take a strategic approach to the long-term skill and knowledge needs of the workforce..... Page 21

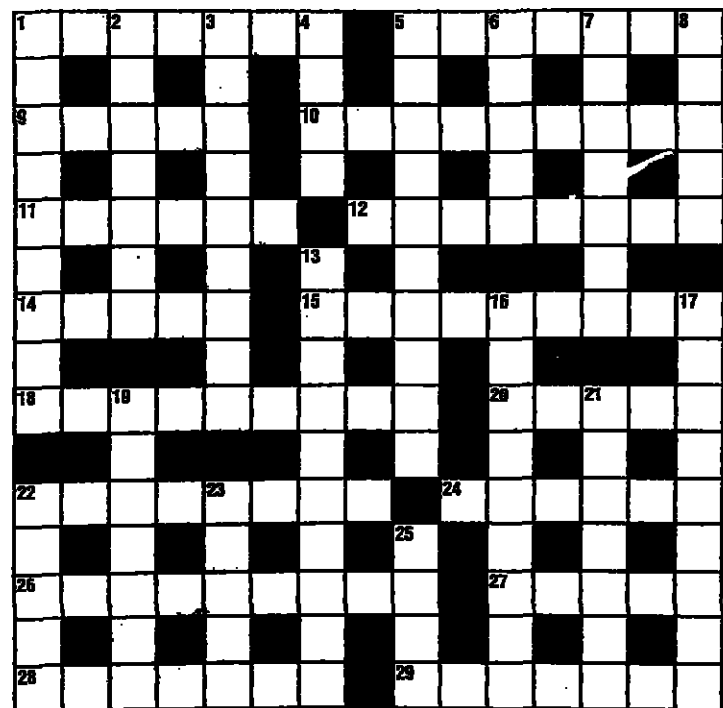
PETER RIDDELL

Labour has only itself to blame for the wobbles in its campaign and the Tory pick-up in yesterday's MORI poll in *The Times*. The root cause is not events over the past ten days but the style of policymaking over the past three years..... Page 12

Helene Hanff, author of *84, Charing Cross Road*; Norman Pirie, scientist and nutritionist; Geoffrey Knight, executive manager, Anglo-French Concorde team..... Page 23

Small businesses and Labour; recycling; Hong Kong; field sports; church entry charges..... Page 21

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,451



- ACROSS**
- Grease covering some cord (7).
 - Insert one mount in map? On the contrary (7).
 - American invested in basic compass (5).
 - Sublime part of prison accommodating bestial inmates (9).
 - One who examines top of bed (6).
 - Way to encourage fish (5).
 - Attack in Durham town centre (5).
 - What gunner uses to carry the high ground (5).
 - Vigorous Tory; oddly, has charm (9).
 - Leading performer has brought in one instrument (5).
 - Irresistible, with passion left over in sweet embrace (8).
 - Said to find buyer for fish (6).

- DOWN**
- Somehow sixteen hundred finally came into being (9).
 - Superior finds Jack a pest (5).
 - Drink getting railmen drunk (7).
 - Workplace touched when monarch visits (7).
 - Leaves when it's time to retire (6,3).
 - People upset over eastern form of address to female deity (7).
 - Genuine article. In form of a tunic (9).
 - Bob or Donald? (4).
 - Ignorant? I'll say! (More than once) (10).
 - Hard question raised concerning bribe (5).
 - I'd seen a different flavouring (7).
 - Some vital ones in undelt cards (5).
 - Sort of table not often seen (10).
 - King - English sovereign - beginning to trust following (9).
 - In all seriousness, get home in good time to go out (9).
 - Schoolboy European head of school expelled (7).
 - This will protect extremity of limb - the limb that's broken (7).
 - The best engineers employed to stop up river (5).
 - A consumer such as Jonathan (5).
 - Bound to have circuit judge's conclusion accepted (4).

Solution to Puzzle No 20,450

OMEGA PALLIASSSE
F P O E R H A
FLASHBUB ROOST
H G O M E U O E
ARTERY UNSPOKEN
N I F S T
DOWNSTAIRS MARC
E A C A A V O
D O P E G E T U P S T E A M
E S T J S F
FUNCTION HAIRDO
R T Y E S V E R
UNARM ARCHIVIST
M K I G U N G E
PRECEDENT GONER

Times Two Crossword, page 48

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Yesterday: Highest day temp: Gatwick airport

22.0 (70°). Lowest day temp: Capel Wath, Highgate, EC (66°). Highest rainfall: Lewish, SE London 0.11in; highest sunshine: Telford, Shropshire, 12.4hr

FORECAST

■ **General:** England and Wales will start dry and sunny, but cloud and patchy rain will soon spread south across northern areas. The band of cloud and ever decreasing amounts of light rain will follow to southern areas in the afternoon. At the same time the North should become brighter, perhaps with the odd shower.

■ **Southern Scotland and Northern Ireland** will be mostly cloudy with some patchy rain at first but brighter weather with a few showers will follow from the North by afternoon.

■ **London, SE England, Cent S England, S Wales:** dry with sunny spells. Becoming rather cloudy later with perhaps some light rain. Wind light to moderate north to northwest. Warm. Max 17C (63F).

■ **E Anglia, Midlands, E England, N Wales, NW England, Cent N England:** dry, bright start becoming mostly cloudy with some patchy light rain. Turning brighter later. Wind moderate to fresh north to northwest.

Fresher. Max 14C (57F).
■ **Channel Isles, SW England:** dry and mostly sunny, more cloudy in evening. Wind north to northwest, mainly moderate. Warm. Max 18C (64F).

■ **Lake District, Isle of Man, NE England, Borders, Edinburgh & Dundee, SW Scotland, Glasgow, Argyll, N Ireland:** mostly cloudy with patchy light rain or drizzle at first. Becoming brighter later and mostly dry. Wind moderate locally fresh north to northwest. Max 13C (55F).

■ **Aberdeen, Cent Highlands, Moray Firth, N Scotland:** sunny spells and scattered light showers. Wind north to northwest mostly fresh. Max 11C (52F).

■ **Orkney, Shetland:** sunny spells and showers, some heavy and perhaps, wintry. Wind north to northwest strong to gale. Max 8C (46F).

■ **Outlook for weekend:** mostly dry with bright or sunny spells, apart from far north.

AROUND BRITAIN YESTERDAY

24 hrs to 5 pm: b=brilliant; c=cloud; d=drizzle; ds=drizzle; f=fast; g=gale; h=heat; r=rain; sh=shower; s=sunny; w=wind; x=unknown; y=very; z=zero

	Sun	Rain	C	Max	Min		Sun	Rain	C	Max	Min
Aberdeen	5.9	18	64	b	10.4	Lowestoft	10.4	18	64	s	
Anglesey	11.9	12	54	s	12.1	Manchester	12.1	13	55	s	
Angus	12.2	14	57	s	10.3	Marlow	10.3	13	55	s	
Armagh	8.4	16	61	s	11.1	Midland	X				
Belfast	10.8	13	55	b	11.1	Millers	X				
Birmingham	10.8	13	55	b	11.1	Newcastle	10.1	11	62	s	
Bognor R	12.0	19	66	b	11.5	Newbury	11.5	20	66	s	
Bournemouth	11.9	18	63	s	11.5	Northampton	11.5	18	63	s	
Bristol	11.7	21	70	s	11.1	Oldford	11.1	19	66	s	
Buckingham	10.8	13	55	b	11.1	Orkney	X				
Cardiff	11.8	18	64	s	11.5	Poole	9.5	X			
Canterbury	12.1	14	57	s	10.3	Prestetyn	X	12	54	s	
Carlisle	11.3	17	61	s	11.5	Ramsgate	11.1	11	62	s	
Croft	11.5	18	63	s	11.5	Rye	11.8	19	66	s	
Eastbourne	11.7	18	63	s	11.5	Sandwich	12.2	20	66	s	
Edinburgh	10.5	17	60	s	11.5	Seaford	11.6	17	63	s	
Exeter	11.5	18	63	s	11.5	Seaford Sun	11.0	19	66	s	
Falmouth	11.8	18	63	s	11.5	Sharnbrook	11.8	X	52	s	
Folkestone	11.5	18	63	s	11.5	Sharnbrook	10.8	14	54	s	
Glasgow	11.7	18	63	s	11.5	Sharnbrook	X	12	54	s	
Glasgow	11.7	18	63	s	11.5	Southend	X	17	63	s	
Grimsby	11.5	18	63	s	11.5	Southend	X	17	63	s	
Hastings	11.5	18	63	s	11.5	Southsea	10.3	16	61	s	
Hawthorn	11.5	18	63	s	11.5	Stamowry	12.3	2.01	12	54	s
Heathrow	11.5	18	63	s	11.5	Stamowry	12.3	2.01	12	54	s
Hemel Hempstead	11.5	18	63	s	11.5	Talmagh	11.1	17	63	s	
Hove	11.5	18	63	s	11.5	Talmagh	11.1	17	63	s	
Humberside	11.5	18	63	s	11.5	Tenby	11.4	12	63	s	
Isle of Man	12.1	21	70	s	11.1	Tenby	11.4	12	63	s	
Leeds	11.5	18	63	s	11.5	Tenby	11.4	12	63	s	
Leicester	11.5	18	63	s	11.5	Tenby	11.4	12	63	s	
Liverpool	11.5	18	63	s	11.5	Tenby	11.4	12	63	s	
Luton	11.5	18	63	s	11.5	Tenby	11.4	12	63	s	
Manchester	11.5	18	63	s	11.5	Tenby	11.4	12	63	s	
Marlow	11.5	18	63	s	11.5	Tenby	11.4	12	63	s	
Medford	11.5	18	63	s	11.5	Tenby	11.4	12	63	s	
Middlesbrough	11.5	18	63	s	11.5	Tenby	11.4	12	63	s	
Millers	11.5	18	63	s	11.5	Tenby	11.4	12	63	s	
Milton Keynes	11.5	18	63	s	11.5	Tenby	11.4	12	63	s	
Murphy	11.5	18	63	s	11.5	Tenby	11.4	12	63	s	
Newcastle	11.5	18	63	s	11.5	Tenby	11.4	12	63	s	
Newport	11.5	18	63	s	11.5	Tenby	11.4	12	63	s	
Nottingham	11.5	18	63	s	11.5	Tenby	11.4	12	63	s	
Northampton	11.5	18	63	s	11.5	Tenby	11.4	12	63	s	
Northwich	11.5	18	63	s	11.5	Tenby	11.4	12	63	s	
Oldham	11.5	18	63	s	11.5	Tenby	11.4	12	63	s	
Orkney	11.5	18	63	s	11.5	Tenby	11.4	12	63	s	
Ossett	11.5	18	63	s	11.5	Tenby	11.4	12	63	s	
Perth	11.5	18	63	s	11.5	Tenby	11.4	12	63	s	
Peterborough	11.5	18	63	s	11.5	Tenby	11.4	12	63	s	
Plymouth	11.5	18	63	s	11.5	Tenby	11.4	12	63	s	
Portsmouth	11.5	18	63	s	11.5	Tenby	11.4	12	63	s	

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FRIDAY APRIL 11 1997

Utilities shares boosted by modest windfall tax hopes

BY PHILIP BASSETT
AND CHRISTINE BUCKLEY

SHARES in utilities rose yesterday on expectations that Labour's windfall tax will be more modest than at first feared in the City. The rises were accompanied by a call from the main telecommunications unions for Labour to reduce the impact of windfall tax on British Telecom.

The call by the unions to go easy

on the windfall tax comes ahead of today's inclusion of the tax as a key element of Labour's election manifesto for business.

Leaders of the Communication Workers' Union and the Society of Telecom Executives, however, stopped short of urging Labour to refrain from applying the windfall tax to BT at all.

In a policy statement on the future of UK telecommunications, the two

unions said they understood that "for legal and political reasons" it might not be possible for a future Labour government to exclude BT from the windfall tax, which Labour intends to use to fund programmes to help the unemployed.

The unions said that Labour should take into account the fact that BT had been well regulated, and though profitable, its profits had not produced the kind of public

outrage that profits of gas and electricity had generated.

The unions pointed out that BT, which was privatised in 1984 — long before the other utility firms — had already paid £8 billion to the Treasury in corporation tax, that its prices had been reviewed by its regulator Ofel four times so far, and that, unlike some other domestic utilities, it faces extensive competition both within the United

Kingdom and outside its borders.

But as the election row over windfall tax continued, with John Major claiming that falling unemployment figures are making it irrelevant, strong gains were made on the stock market. United Utilities, the multi-utility that is likely to attract a double blow because it has a water and electricity business, rose 26½p to 670p. Similarly Hyder, another combined utility, increased 13p to

831½p. Of the water companies, Anglian rose 11p to 649½p. Severn Trent increased 17½p to 736½p and Yorkshire's price was lifted 13½p to 367½p.

The power generators also benefited with PowerGen up 22p to 633p and National Power up 12½p to 527p. BT gained 9p to 442½p and Railtrack rose 10p to 429½p.

Markets, page 28

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES

FTSE 100	4313.2	(+20.9)
Yield	3.65%	
FTSE All share	2085.7	(+8.14)
Nikkei	17485.75	(+217.62)
New York		
Dow Jones	6583.06	(-0.75)
S&P Composite	789.84	(-0.88)

US RATE

Federal Funds	5¼%	(5¼%)
Long Bond	82½%	(84½%)
Yield	7.12%	(7.10%)

LONDON MONEY

3-month Interbank	6¼%	(6¼%)
Life long gilt	100%	(109¼)

STERLING

New York	1.6230*	(1.6190)
London		
\$	1.6241	(1.6233)
DM	2.7884	(2.7915)
FF	5.3853	(5.3832)
Sfr	2.3554	(2.3524)
Yen	204.82	(205.38)
S index	99.3	(99.4)

US DOLLAR

London		
DM	1.7162*	(1.7261)
Sfr	5.7815*	(5.8070)
Yen	147.10*	(148.00)
S index	125.53*	(126.69)
Tokyo close	105.7	(105.8)

TOKYO CLOSE

Yen 126.13

NORTH SEA OIL

Brent 15-day (Jun) \$17.90 (\$18.00)

GAUL

London close \$347.85 (\$348.05)

* denotes midday trading price

Blair pledge to revitalise PFI goals

BY PHILIP BASSETT, INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

LABOUR will set out new plans today to revitalise the Private Finance Initiative, in the first concrete indication of a closer public-private partnership in government.

The move — the first detailing of Labour's plans since the shift on privatisation signalled this week by Tony Blair — will come in Labour's election manifesto for business being launched in the City today.

Mr Blair will proclaim *Equipping Britain for the Future* as the culmination of Labour's extensive consultation with business — both here and abroad — in preparation for government.

Labour's 12-point plan for the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) will form one of the five key pledges Mr Blair and Gordon Brown, the Shadow Chancellor, will make to business leaders today. These cov-

er a commitment to low inflation and stable macroeconomic policy; to public-private partnerships, including a revitalised PFI, to a better-skilled workforce; to the involvement of small business; and to full backing for business in Europe.

Today's business manifesto will say: "The old argument as to whether public ownership was always best or whether privatisation was the only answer is behind us."

The manifesto, a copy of which has been seen by *The Times*, will say: "The truth is there are some things that the private sector does best and others where the public sector is appropriate. And in many more cases a combination of both public and private sector is necessary."

The manifesto emphasises Labour's "practical approach"

and the importance of partnerships to bring real economic benefits to all involved. "We recognise the value that the private sector can so often bring to projects where there is scope to apply its expertise, disciplines and economies of scale," it says.

Labour will announce that if elected it will establish a new public-private sector taskforce within the Treasury, reporting to a minister with direct responsibility for the issue.

Mr Blair will announce a 12-point plan for partnership, which will include a pledge that all current PFI deals already signed or accepted will proceed "without delay"; new legislation if necessary to ensure public bodies have the powers to enter into PFI contracts; early and rigorous appraisal of PFI bids so that bidders do not waste resources on projects unlikely to work; a timetable, where possible, on each project to give bidders a clear idea of decisions; and new guidance on risk transfer and on tendering for partnership projects.

Other pledges will include commitments on strengthening the Private Finance Panel, on including small firms, and on firm control of public sector revenue commitments.

Many of the moves are in line with changes to the PFI urged by industry leaders. The Major Contractors' Group, representing big construction firms — some of which have been key donors to the Conservative Party — will welcome the 12-point plan as proposals that "will do much to smooth the path of public-private partnership".

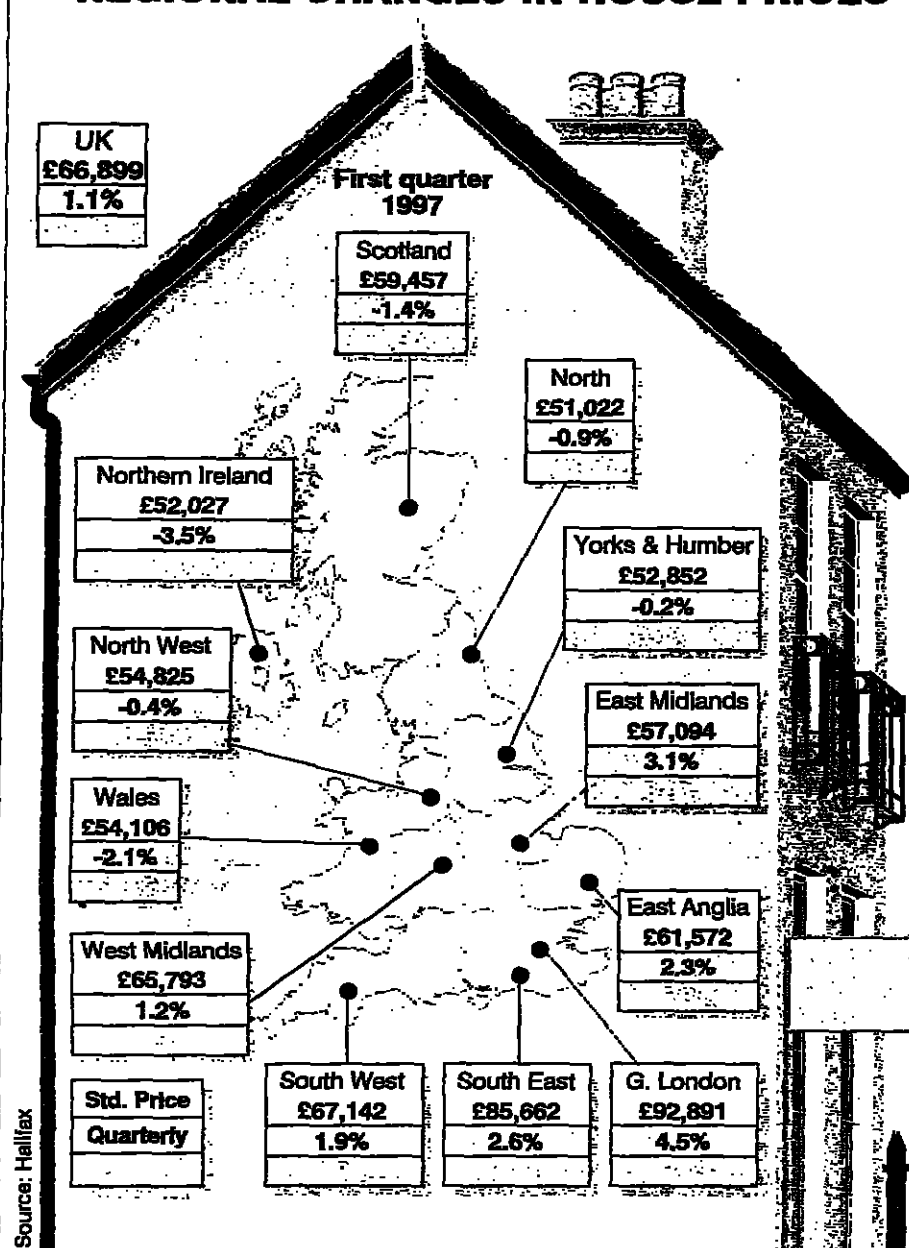
The business manifesto will also commit Labour to reviewing in government the option of extending capital allowances to bring forward new investment.

The manifesto will be endorsed by key business leaders attending the launch at the Institute of Chartered Accountants, including Gerry Robinson, chairman of Granada. Mr Robinson gave support to Labour last night in the party's first election broadcast, together with Anita Roddick, chief executive of Body Shop International, and Sir Terence Conran, chairman of Conran Holdings and founder of the Habitat chain.

In a letter to *The Times* today 84 small business leaders endorse Labour, insisting that small firms can look forward with confidence to a profitable future under a Labour government.

PFI outlook, page 29

REGIONAL CHANGES IN HOUSE PRICES



House prices dip in six regions

BY CAROLINE MERRELL

HOUSE prices in many parts of Britain fell in the first quarter of this year, according to a survey from the Halifax, the UK's biggest building society.

In spite of reports of a 1980s-style housing boom in London, the Halifax survey found that prices dropped in Scotland, northern and north-west England, Yorkshire, Northern Ireland and Wales in the three months to March 31. The biggest fall occurred in Northern Ireland, where prices fell 3.5 per cent. In Scotland, prices fell by 1.4 per cent. House prices in the North were down 0.9 per cent.

Significant house price rises were confined to the more affluent areas of the South East and Greater London. Prices in London have risen by more than 17 per cent in the past year and by 4.5 per cent over the last quarter.

The rate of annual house price inflation in Greater London is now more than double that of the average rise, which is 7.2 per cent, according to the index.

Gary Marsh, Halifax assistant general manager, said: "We are not going to change our house price forecast from

the one we made at the beginning of the year. We think that house prices will rise by 7 per cent nationally and by around 10 per cent in the Greater London area."

Nationally, house prices rose 1 per cent in March, against 0.6 per cent in February. House prices have now risen by 7.2 per cent over the year.

Halifax said: "The number of sales are still showing double-digit growth, while certain areas are seeing growth well above 30 per cent year on year." Demand was extremely healthy and there was a shortage of supply in some areas, it said.

Mr Marsh attributed the boom in the London house market to a number of factors. "House prices in the South and London fell further during the recession and have further to bounce back," he said. Big City bonuses and foreign buyers were also lifting London property prices. The strength of sterling means that foreign buyers can now get more in rental income from investing in property. However, London prices are still 11 per cent below their peak, in 1988.

Pennington, page 27

Shell challenged on green audit

BY CARL MORTISHED

SHELL is on a collision course with a group of dissident shareholders over their demands for an environmental audit of the group's activities.

The Anglo-Dutch oil multinational is opposing a resolution tabled for the annual meeting on May 14 that requests that Shell establish an independent external review and audit procedure for its environmental and corporate responsibility policies.

The resolution is supported by 118 mainly church-based shareholders and Pirc, the ethical lobby, which together account for 1 per cent of the shares. It asks for designated board responsibility for the environment, effective internal procedures and a report to shareholders on policy implementation in Nigeria, where Shell came under fire for alleged environmental damage.

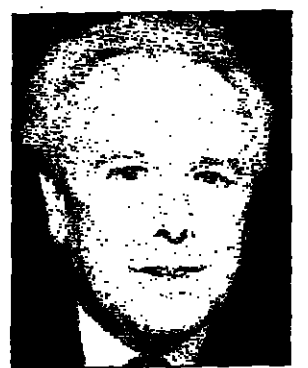
John Jennings, chairman of Shell Transport & Trading, the UK holding company, yesterday said the company rejected the implication that the group does not have effective policies in place. He said that responsibility for the environment was already handled at board level by Cor Herkstroter, chairman of Royal Dutch Petroleum,

and a report on Nigeria was being sent to shareholders. "The bottom line is we don't think this resolution is necessary," Mr Jennings rejected the demand for an external audit. "In a world with no agreed environmental standards, all you can say is that you have complied with internal procedures."

However, Shell is currently conducting pilot environmental audits in Nigeria and the UK using external auditors.

Pirc yesterday said that environmental audits were accepted as best practice in the oil industry and cited BP, which has an annual environmental audit by Ernst & Young.

Tempus, page 28



Jennings: "unnecessary"

Last tango in Nottingham for Ken and Eddie

BY ALASDAIR MURRAY

BRITAIN'S longest-running economic soap opera reached what is probably its final episode yesterday with its leading actors — Kenneth Clarke and Eddie George — unsure as to their future roles.

The "Ken and Eddie" show has attracted an avid audience from City traders and homeowners alike over the past three years. The plain-speaking, tobacco-loving Chancellor and Gover-

nor of the Bank of England have publicly played out their battles over interest rates each month, against the backdrop of a slowly improving economy.

Norman Lamont actually established the formal monthly monetary meeting in October 1992, but it was Mr Clarke's innovation to publish the minutes of the meeting six weeks later.

Mr Clarke has effortlessly adopted the "man of the people" role. Not to be upstaged, Mr George has won plaudits in the City and abroad for his portrayal

of the hard man of monetary policy. The two decided to take their final show on tour yesterday, meeting in the Inland Revenue office in Nottingham, part of Mr Clarke's constituency. The unfamiliar venue caused technical problems for Mr George, who managed to arrive ten minutes late. But there were no other last-minute surprises in the script and rates are expected to be unchanged at 6 per cent when trading begins this morning.

The City is predicting a rise in rates to come after the next meeting in May, but by then the election may well have consigned the "Ken and Eddie" show to history. Gordon Brown, the Shadow Chancellor, has promised to "depersonalise" monetary policy by establishing inside the Bank a committee that would reduce the Governor's powers. There are also strong suspicions that Labour would seek to appoint its own man at the Bank as soon as possible.

Pennington, page 27

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Conservatives claim that pensions will be lower under Labour

Tax relief at centre of parties' dispute

By ANNE ASHWORTH

PENSIONS returned to the forefront of election controversy yesterday with a Tory charge that pensions would be lower under Labour, as the party was secretly planning damaging tax rises. Labour swiftly rebutted the attack, criticising the Tories' own record on pensions tax and its future policies.

The Conservatives claimed the "£12 billion black hole" in Labour's spending plans would require tax rises that endangered pensions and

could cost companies between £40 billion and £50 billion in extra contributions to their pension schemes.

Labour intended not only to change the taxation of share dividends, but also higher rate tax relief on pension contributions. The Conservatives said the abolition of all pension tax relief is integral to the Conservatives' proposed reforms of the basic state pension, but this would affect future generations of workers, not those now contributing to schemes.

The Conservatives also argued that Labour plans for a

windfall tax on the utilities posed a threat to the value of pensions, as it would hit share prices. Labour first mooted this tax in 1992. In support of their contentions, the Conservatives cited City sources, including Alastair Ross Goobey, chief executive of Hermes Pensions Management, which is responsible for the BT pension fund.

Labour said that there was no basis for the Tories' claims, dismissing them as "desperate talk, intended to frighten". Alastair Darling, Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury,

said: "It is the Tories that are planning to abolish pension tax relief and, as for the impact of the windfall tax, the claims fly in the face of substantial independent evidence."

The Labour manifesto, which pledges to review "the corporate and capital gains tax regime" and the party's "ideological" resistance to dividends is said by the Tories to hint at changes in Advance Corporation Tax (ACT), paid by companies when they distribute dividends to shareholders. A reduction would have a serious impact on pension funds that

are entitled, as nontaxpayers, to reclaim all ACT.

In his March 1993 Budget, Norman Lamont reduced the rate from 25 to 20 per cent. Peter Lilley, the Social Security Secretary, yesterday denied that the party would need to repeat the exercise. He said: "There is no black hole in our finances that puts this type of pressure on us."

The Conservatives said that the loss of the ACT rebate could cost company pension funds £24 billion a year. The party estimated that companies would need to contrib-

ute an extra £40 billion to £50 billion to their schemes to replace this lost income. Sections of the new Pensions Act, which came into effect this week, oblige companies to make good funding gaps at once, rather than over a period of years as before. The figure is based on the £1 billion contributed by BT to its fund, after the last change to ACT.

Mr Ross Goobey said: "A reduction in ACT would reduce the security of pension schemes, just at the time when the Pensions Act is increasing the security of pension schemes."

Pay rise awaits Lyons as he moves to the NPI top job

By MARIANNE CURPHEY

ALASTAIR LYONS, the former chief executive of the National and Provincial Building Society, who left the Abbey National a week ago with a £700,000 payoff, is to join National Provident Institution, the pensions provider, with a salary of £325,000.

Under the existing executive bonus scheme, he also stands to gain up to 25 per cent of his

salary, equivalent to a further £81,250 per annum.

He will succeed Kevin McBrien, chief executive in June. Mr McBrien retires from the board at the beginning of July. Mr Lyons, 43, was previously managing director of Abbey National's insurance division after N&P was taken over by Abbey last year.

Mr Lyons's pay-off from Abbey represented more than two-and-a-half times his annual salary of £250,000.

A separate pension scheme, yet to be confirmed, will be added to his new salary when he transfers his existing pension across from Abbey National.

National Provident Institution, founded in 1835 by Quakers, has 390,000 members and £10 billion funds under management. There has been considerable speculation over its future because access to capital, the cost of new technology and regulation have recently constrained its investment performance.

Ten days ago NPI said it was not up for sale, in spite of having admitted it had held takeover talks with AMP of Australia, Abbey National and NatWest Bank.

Yesterday Mr Lyons insisted NPI would "still be a mutual in ten years' time, in the way that Bradford & Bingley and the Nationwide building societies have a future as mutuals".

Mr Lyons, who read economics at Cambridge and has been the finance director of both Asda and the N&P, said he disagreed with the theory that "medium-sized mutual life companies needed to be demutualised in order to gain access to capital".

He added: "NPI is a strong player and clearly focused in the IFA sector. It will remain a mutual full stop."



Alastair Lyons insisted that the NPI would still be a mutual in ten years' time

Crisis of succession deepens at EBRD

By OLIVER AUGUST

THE European Bank for Reconstruction and Development faces a deepening succession crisis ahead of its annual meeting of shareholders in London this weekend. Today's board meeting, convened to appoint a successor to Ron Freeman, the first vice-president, was cancelled.

The bank, which hands out aid to Eastern Europe, appears split between America, the biggest shareholder, and Belgium and France — the founder shareholders which are nominally in charge of the bank through Jacques de Larosière.

The position of first vice-president is supposed to be filled by an American, according to an inter-governmental agreement. One American candidate, the head of a US public company, withdrew after Mr Freeman's resignation was announced on Tuesday because of a legal conflict.

The French and Belgian factions within the bank are now pushing for Mr Freeman's deputy, Guy de Selliers, to be appointed despite his Belgian nationality.

The Times has learnt that M de Selliers is close to M de Larosière and may have his direct support. M Selliers was brought to the bank by Jacques Attali, the former president. A bank insider said of M Selliers: "He practically runs the bank."

The board is said to face a crisis over Mr Freeman's succession because his resignation was unexpected.

Mr Freeman and M Selliers are believed to have fallen out over Jacques Attali's departure. The EBRD did not deny that Mr Freeman left earlier than expected or that M Selliers wanted to succeed him. The bank said: "We are still looking."

Last night M Selliers said: "I am not a candidate and I am in full agreement with the process that the president has put in place to find a successor for Ron Freeman."

Pennington, page 27

First-quarter lift for building industry

THE building industry picked up slightly in the first quarter, according to figures released by the Department of the Environment yesterday. Total construction orders increased 3 per cent in the three months to the end of February, compared with the previous quarter. However, the annual rate of increase remains at just 1 per cent.

Orders for private housing sector fell 1 per cent quarter-on-quarter, but were 36 per cent higher than a year before. Public housing and housing association orders dropped 2 per cent quarter-on-quarter and were 11 per cent lower than in the same period last year. Infrastructure orders were 10 per cent lower in the three months to February, compared with the previous three months. However, they were 6 per cent higher than in the same period of last year.

Surge for Dresdner

DRESDNER BANK, the German commercial bank that owns Kleinwort Benson in Britain, yesterday reported a 30.7 per cent rise in 1996 net profits to DM1.58 billion. The bank is paying an ordinary annual dividend of DM1.45 a share and a special anniversary bonus of 10 pfennigs a share. The bank did not show separate results for Kleinwort Benson, which has now been fully absorbed into Dresdner's investment banking arm.

Rank buyback approved

SHAREHOLDERS of Rank Group, the leisure and entertainment organisation, yesterday approved plans for the company to buy back up to 10 per cent of its shares. Sir Denis Henderson, chairman, told the annual meeting that the company was in a period of transition and its businesses generally had made good progress. He added it has been a quiet period for video releases and lower operating profit in video duplication has broadly offset increases elsewhere.

EU drops hint on BT

BRITISH TELECOM yesterday said it was confident that its £12 billion takeover of MCI, America's second-largest long-distance phone company, will receive European Union approval before the summer. The comments came after the office of Karel van Miert, the EU's Competition Commissioner, hinted that an approval may be issued before the June 11 deadline. The merger of BT and MCI is not expected to receive American regulatory approval before the autumn.

Success for Friendly

FRIENDLY HOTELS, owner of the Comfort, Clarion and Quality hotel chains, has found a buyer for its troubled serviced office business. But the group, which is striving to reduce its debts, said it would not sign the deal until it was sure the buyer could afford to keep up payments. The company returned to the black last year, earning £4.47 million before tax after writing back £1.3 million from a provision taken in 1995 for writing down the property value of the serviced offices arm.

TransCo attack

INDUSTRIAL gas consumers yesterday pressed the Monopolies and Mergers Commission for tough treatment of TransCo, BG's pipeline monopoly, in its investigation into price curbs planned by the regulator. The Energy Intensive Users Group urged endorsement of the regulator's proposals. Lisa Waters, policy adviser to the group, said: "We have paid too much already for TransCo's monopoly service and it is time users got the deal they deserve."

Wyfield warning

WYFIELD, the struggling furniture maker, has given warning that flat markets in Britain and Germany have left it unable to pull itself into profit over the past nine months. The company, now heading for its second consecutive year in the red, lost £337,000 (£491,000 loss) in the last six months of 1996. Prospects for its last quarter were much better, it said. Losses per share eased to 1.3p (1.9p loss) and there is no dividend. Its shares fell 1p to 14p.

Shares in A&L to be auctioned

By CAROLINE MERRELL

THE Alliance & Leicester Building Society, due to float on the stock market on April 21, is to sell off shares to institutional investors in a series of auctions.

The A&L is to issue 582 million shares to 2.4 million of its savers and borrowers on the day it floats. A fair proportion of these shareholders will want to sell their shares immediately through the society's free dealing service. Cazenove, the broker acting for the society, is to sell the shares in a series of three auctions, starting on April 18. Everyone selling immediately will receive the same price — the average price from all the auctions.

Cazenove is sending out pre-registration forms, for completion by April 16. Bids will be accepted only from Stock Exchange members. People using the A&L to sell their windfall shares in it will get their money on April 28.

Watchdog fines Lincoln

By GAVIN LUMSDEN

IMRO, the City watchdog for fund managers, has fined Lincoln Unit Trust Managers and LTV, its investment arm, £20,000 and ordered it to pay £30,000 costs.

The move follows a failure to bank clients' money invested in personal equity plans (PEPs) on time and breaching compliance moni-

toring rules. About 700 PEP clients suffered from the breaches, which occurred between April 1993 and February 1995, Imro said.

Lincoln said that its unit trust and PEP operation had been completely overhauled since its takeover of Lauderhill Fund Managers in April 1995. Save & Prosper, another fund manager, has given a warning to companies provid-

ing PEPs that they could be overwhelmed by this summer's wave of windfall shares from demutualising building societies and insurance companies.

About 16 million people are due to receive about £23 billion worth of shares from the flotations of the Alliance & Leicester, Halifax, Northern Rock, Woolwich and Norwich Union.

LEGAL & PUBLIC NOTICES

PUBLIC NOTICES

BANKFORD, RAYMOND BANKFORD late of Telford Park, London W1 on 14 June 1996 (estate about £7,000)

CARR, ANTHONY WALTER CARR late of Loughton, Essex died on 23 November 1996 (estate about £100,000)

CHARTERED, CHARLOTTE late of Sharnbrook, County Durham died on 2 December 1996 (estate about £5,000)

CHURCHILL, late of Ashby de la Zouche, Leicestershire died on 17 February 1996 (estate about £20,000)

DEAN, HEAVYWEIGHT DEAN late of Reading, Essex died on 11 February 1996 (estate about £50,000)

FOX, REGINALD REGINALD FOX late of Reading, Essex died on 11 February 1996 (estate about £50,000)

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LEGAL NOTICES

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE

CHANCERY DIVISION

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IN THE MATTER OF THE

COMPANIES ACT 1985

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□ Britain has two distinct housing markets □ Vanguard's array of share option schemes □ Sorry tale at the EBRD

Homing in on higher prices

HOUSING, the topic that ruined a thousand 1980s dinner parties, is back on the menu again. Family homeowners are boasting about the thousands they have already made on their purchase. Parents are nagging young Charles or Lucy to secure their future by jumping on the housing ladder. Even commentators, most of whom live in the South, it must be said, are spreading the word that the boom times are back.

Step outside the shires and the leafy suburbs for a second. The reality is that the housing recovery to date has been fragile and patchy. Prices in Greater London have risen 17 per cent in the past year, while other areas have seen increases barely in line with inflation. In the first three months of this year prices in the North of England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland actually fell.

There are specific structural reasons why prices in London and the South East are running so far ahead. The region has a shortage of suitable housing, attracts the bulk of foreign buyers and has a service-based economy that is outpacing the rest of the country. Right at the top end of the market there are all those City bonuses swirling around.

Yet there are some very good reasons, outlined in a recent paper from Nikko Europe, to believe that the nationwide hous-

ing market is never going to return to the heady days of the 1980s. Mortgage interest relief has been cut back and the suspicion is that it will be phased out entirely eventually — no matter which party wins the election. The manifestos have also been curiously quiet on the subject of housing, in contrast to the days when council house sales were a central plank of the Conservative policy.

Flexible labour markets, meanwhile, have made it harder to take out and service inflexible mortgages, while low inflation makes high debt burdens seem less attractive, says Nikko.

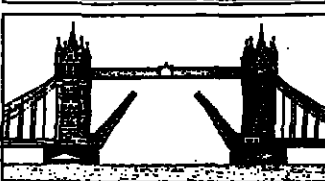
Where London leads, the rest of the country will follow. Housing booms have always had as much to do with consumer psychology as economic fundamentals. If those who have profited from the price rises of the 1970s and 1980s can persuade the twentysomethings, who have never experienced a slump, that immediate home ownership is the only way forward, the whole sorry story of the 1990s slump may yet be replayed, and the need

to create four million or so new homes there, should protect the South East from the worst effects of any crash. Yet there are two clear dangers. One is that the above psychology will drive up prices to unsustainable levels in areas where there is no underlying growth in demand. The other is that houses in the South East will end up worth so much more than those elsewhere that movement from one area to the other becomes unattractive one way, because of years of lost house price inflation, and impossible in the other direction — with disastrous effects on mobility in the jobs market.

A drug on the market

VANGUARD Media is one of the most impressive biotechnology companies to have joined the stock market. It was founded, and is advised, by a dazzling array of pharmaceutical industry talent — men such as Sir John Vane, a Nobel prize-winner, and Sir David Jack, who was responsible at Glaxo for

PENNINGTON



developing the Zantac ulcer drug, one of the most successful compounds developed.

A pity, therefore, that Vanguard's first annual report since its flotation has to devote four pages to spelling out the complexities of a profusion of ten separate share option schemes. There are approved and unapproved schemes, a scheme dependent on share price performance, a scheme dependent on the FT-SE pharmaceuticals index, and even a scheme just for the benefit of Sir William Asscher, another heavyweight. With so much effort devoted to the directors' remuneration, it's a wonder that Vanguard has time to do any research. It looks like some experiment

gone hideously wrong — option schemes breeding out of control in a test-tube somewhere. The reason is Vanguard's unusual origins, which justify the award of options, quite contrary to Greenbury, to non-executive directors — a practice that ceased on flotation anyway. The exercise of the main options is sensibly staggered to give directors a long-term interest in the company's performance.

There are schemes to remunerate the founders, not all of whom are on the board — you do not attract such a selection of medical greats without offering something other than a further chance to alleviate human suffering. There are some tax funnies that define which scheme is best, all quite legal. Yet the arrangements do not create a terribly good impression.

Although not all exercisable, the options held by Robert Mansfield, chief executive, for example, are already worth a notional £4.7 million. Vanguard's sales last year were rather more modest, at £95,000. The suspicion is that without yet producing a single drug of note,

Britain's biotech industry has already created some huge fortunes — nearly all of them for company insiders.

Trouble at the Glistening Bank

EVENTS move from bad to worse at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the institution set up to help the poor and the huddled masses of eastern Europe that has indeed turned out to be a fount of generosity — to the people who work there. The Americans are understandably keen to retain some control by putting in one of their own as first vice-president, subordinate only to Jacques de Larosière, the president.

The departure of Ron Freeman, heading back to Salomon Brothers with a huge sigh of relief, one assumes, has allowed the Franco-Belgian axis within the bank to block this. They want a European, to preserve the cultural identity of the bank. More specifically, they want Guy de Selliers, a protégé of Jacques

Attali. Mr Attali was M de Larosière's predecessor, thrown out for spending rather more on doing up the London headquarters than on those selfsame huddled masses.

If chauvinist Anglo-Saxon hackles rise at this sorry tale of influence-broking, then this is hardly surprising. Just rewrite the scenario at the Bank of England — or the Federal Reserve, where there is a fuss because a member of the influential Open Market Committee is merely going out with a merchant banker. Imagine if Eddie George, having taken over from a sacked Rupert Pennant-Rea, within four years was trying to move in his protégé as heir apparent. For M de Larosière is due to retire in five months. On present form, this could leave the EBRD with two spaces at the top.

Exit poll

SO farewell then the Ken and Eddie show, unless the polls have got it wrong again. It was always an undignified label for a meeting of two financial minds. The Gordon and Eddie show is assured of at least one performance, in May, so Gordon can raise interest rates. Let us hope the name does not stick. The only Gordon and Eddie anyone around here can recall is in the Thomas the Tank Engine books.

RMC attacks lack of UK transport policy

By PAUL DURMAN

RMC GROUP, Europe's largest concrete producer, yesterday made a strong attack on Britain's lack of a transport policy and its low level of infrastructure spending.

RMC was reporting reduced annual profits of £295.3 million, down from £324.9 million in 1995 because of the depressed German construction industry. Yet even in a bad year, Germany's output of ready mixed concrete — a proxy for total construction spending, according to Derek Jenkins, finance director — was, at 67 million cubic metres, more than three times the UK total of 21 million.

Peter Young, chief executive, said Britain was investing much less in new roads and buildings than its European Union partners. He said: "It's terrible. Unfortunately the environmentalists have won all the votes. There's no votes in putting anything right at the moment. There will be in ten years' time when the whole place is grid-locked."

Mr Young said the weaknesses of the often-criticised Private Finance Initiative was only a side issue, since the PFI could only ever account for a small part of total infrastructure spending. Ultimately,



Peter Young, left, and Derek Jenkins yesterday

there was no alternative to government spending on roads.

RMC has changed its accounting policy to state its profits at average exchange rates, which it said gave a

better indication of underlying trading. Since RMC sells nearly all its ready mixed concrete and other building materials in the countries it makes them, currency is only important in translating re-

sults into sterling. On the old basis using year-end exchange rates, RMC's profits fell from £329.3 million to £275.8 million last year.

Group sales were barely changed at £4.56 billion, although sales in Germany were £120 million lower at £1.68 billion. German profits fell by a quarter to £139.6 million, held back by the severe winter last year, reduced public spending and a fall in housebuilding. RMC has shed 1,100 staff in Germany. This and other redundancies contributed to RMC restructuring costs of £22 million.

In the UK RMC made a profit of £72.8 million (£76.8 million). Besides government cutbacks and slow progress on the PFI, RMC blamed the lack of a significant recovery in new housing.

Although Mr Young said trading in France was "torrid", RMC's operations in the Irish Republic, Portugal and Denmark performed strongly, helping the "other European" division to raise profits to £56.1 million (£51.4 million).

A final dividend of 18.7p should be paid on June 2. This will lift the total payout by 5.8 per cent to 26.5p.

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Samsung to make Verity's flat speaker

A BRITISH company that has developed loudspeakers no thicker than the cover of a hardback book has agreed to license the technology to Samsung. Korea's largest electronics maker (Eric Reguly writes).

Verity Group said that Samsung will make "flat-panel" speakers for the personal computer, multimedia, audio and video markets. Samsung, which will pay Verity a royalty on sales, said that the technology could "revolutionise the loudspeaker industry".

Flat-panel speakers, designed to save space and weight, dispense with the traditional cone, magnet and metal coils. An electromagnetic device activates a wafer-thin panel of composite materials. The speakers could be used in computers, telephones, aircraft and cars.

Shares react positively to Glaxo liver drug test

By ERIC REGULY

GLAXO WELLCOME, the world's largest pharmaceuticals company, said clinical results of a new drug designed to treat hepatitis B, one of the most common diseases in developing countries, produced encouraging results.

Lehman Brothers, the securities firm, estimates sales of the drug, called lamivudine, could reach \$1 billion by 2005. The drug is to be submitted for regulatory approvals in Asia later this year.

Analysts said lamivudine has strong sales potential because about 350 million people, the majority of them in the poorer parts of Asia and Africa, suffer from disease. Hepatitis B, a virus that causes inflammation of the liver, is often fatal. Glaxo shares rose 20p to £11.08.

Lehman said: "Lamivudine



Sykes: approvals sought

has the greatest commercial potential of any drug in Glaxo's short-term pipeline." Steve Abbott, at Credit Lyonnais, the broker, said: "The company, in its very conservative way, called it encouraging. That's a 'Glaxoism' for very, very good."

Lamivudine, which can be taken orally, was discovered by BioChem Pharma, of Canada, and was licensed to Glaxo in 1990. The results of its phase three clinical trials — the last trials before a drug reaches the market — involving 338 Asian patients with chronic hepatitis B resulted in liver damage reversal in two thirds of the cases. In some patients, the virus could no longer be detected.

The price of the drug, estimated at \$800 a year, is too expensive for many patients in the developing world. Glaxo, it appears, will have to market the drug directly to national health authorities. Glaxo, whose chief executive is Sir Richard Sykes, expects Asian regulatory approvals by early next year. North American and European approvals will also be sought.

Tempos, page 28

Ex-directors get £75,000 incentive

By CARL MORTISHED

TWO former directors of Ham-merson, the property group, received payments totalling £75,000 last year under a phantom share option scheme after they had left the company.

James Riddell, finance director until June 1995, received £41,200 under the incentive scheme. He had previously had £150,000 in compensation for loss of office. Roy Johnson, also a director, retired at the end of 1995, but last year received £34,334 under the scheme.

A Ham-merson spokesman said the scheme was initiated in August 1993 after the appointment of Ron Spinney as chief executive. Ham-merson's annual report says that remuneration policy "is to ensure that through fair reward taking account of market conditions, the group is able to attract, retain and motivate experienced individuals". The scheme awards a not-



Spinney: group chief

ional holding of 100,000 Ham-merson shares to each participant and bonuses are calculated on the basis of any rise in the share price above £3.46 as at August 12 1993.

Mr Riddell and Mr Johnson no longer have any phantom shares under the scheme.

Fashion retailer poised to expand

By SARAH CUNNINGHAM

FRENCH CONNECTION, the fashion wholesaler and retailer, is planning to open eight more shops this year, adding a third more selling space after nearly doubling its profits last year.

Pre-tax profit at the company, which also makes the Nicole Farhi high fashion line, reached £6.2 million in the year to January 31 from £3.4 million a year earlier.

Turnover was up 17.3 per cent to £83 million and same store sales rose 21.6 per cent, boosted by a particularly strong second half in the UK. The only words of caution on current trade concerned the US, which has had a slow start to the spring season.

Half of the new stores will be in the UK and half in America. They will take the total chain to 50 and take selling space from 100,000 sq ft to 130,000 sq ft. The com-

pany, which has widened its ranges to include shoes and accessories, is also opening three franchises in the UK and is considering opening its first Nicole Farhi store in the US.

French Connection is the latest in a string of high street clothing retailers, including Next, Moss Bros and Oasis, to report strong figures in recent days. "The environment has been a lot better," David Bernstein, chairman, said yesterday. But he suggested that not all retailers are benefiting: "The strong are getting stronger; it is not across the board."

The shares fell 20p to 325p, hit by profit-taking. Earnings per share were 18.3p (10.6p) and the final dividend of 2.25p (2p), payable on July 2, gives a full-year dividend of 2.75p (2p).

Tempos, page 28

US corporate giants report record first-quarter earnings

FROM RICHARD THOMSON IN NEW YORK

UPBEAT results for General Electric and Chrysler, two of America's largest companies, have spurred hopes that US industrial performance may not be as bad as many investors feared during the first quarter of this year.

Worries about falling corporate profits have caused much of the recent weakness on the New York stock market as investors anticipated ad-

verse results from slowing consumer demand and higher interest rates.

General Electric reported record first-quarter earnings, up 11 per cent to \$1.67 billion, and predicted that it would deliver record results for the year. Ten of its 12 main divisions reported earnings increases, with six achieving double figure increases. The star performer was GE Capital Services where earnings rose 16 per cent to \$754 million, from \$650 million.

John Welch, the GE chairman, said: "These strong first-quarter results position GE to deliver another year of record performance in 1997."

Chrysler Corp. America's third-largest car manufacturer, also reported record first-quarter profits of \$1.70 billion, up from \$1.67 billion in the first quarter last year. Earnings of \$1.45 a share were slightly above Wall Street's expectations. Continuing strong consumer demand, helped by increased sales

incentives, ensured record sales and revenues.

Although yesterday's results may not be enough to shore up the weakening stock market, they gave investors some hope that the investment outlook may be better than many analysts have been predicting.

"A lot of experts have been saying that industrial profits will flatten out and maybe decline but so far they seem to have been wrong," a New York analyst said.

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STOCK MARKET

CLARE STEWART

Water and electricity mix as utilities gain ground

WATER and electricity stocks provided an interesting mix yesterday as utility shares surged into action.

United Utilities, the water group, put on 26½p to 670p. Severn Trent enjoyed another good day, rising 17½p to 736½p, while Thames added 8½p to 679½p.

Buyers moved in to take advantage of the apparent confusion over the windfall tax, and the extent to which a Labour government would squeeze the utilities.

Positive talk from brokers also helped to lift water shares. Schroders is a buyer of the sector, believing that the risk factors have been exaggerated and political uncertainties already discounted. United Utilities and Wessex Water, up 8p to 390p yesterday, are particular favourites.

The generators also moved up after the recent NatWest Securities buy note. PowerGen added 22p to 633½p, with National Power up 12½p to 527p. National Grid saw more than 15 million shares change hands. The shares ended up 2p at 213½p.

The added fizz generated by activity in the utilities helped the market to notch up stronger gains overall. Ignoring an uninspiring performance from Wall Street and Kenneth Clarke's meeting with Eddie George, the FT-SE 100 closed up 20.9 at 4,313.2, its best of the day. Volumes remained thin with just over 600 million shares changing hands and dealers looking to bed and breakfast deals to boost activity.

Centrica, up ½p to 59½p, and BG, up 3p to 179p, were among the most heavily traded stocks with BT also busy as 18 million shares changed hands. BT shares ended 9p higher at 442½p while British Steel fell 1½p after a further sterling-related downgrade.

Glaxo Wellcome was in demand, adding 20p to £11.08½ after news on encouraging trials of lamivudine, a drug used to treat hepatitis B. SmithKline Beecham moved up 2p to 917½p, while Zeneca jumped 1½p to £18.16.

A buy recommendation helped Unilever to put on 25p to £15.59, while talk of bid interest from Associated British Foods sweetened Tate & Lyle 8p to 444p. ABE, which reports results next week, edged down 1½p to 528p. Booker was also in demand, adding 7½p to 334p.



Manchester United lost in the City as well as on the pitch

Fashion retailers continued their run with Next one of the top FT-SE 100 performers for much of the day. It ended up 12½p at 645p. French Connection announced an 81.5 per cent rise in pre-tax profits, but the shares, after recent good rises, fell 20p on profit taking to end at 325p.

The green light in the US for a new soft contact lens gave

£3.5 million. AIM-quoted Tracker Network accelerated into the fast lane with a 40p rise to 575p, a high for the shares. The vehicle tracking group moved into profit last year and reported a strong first quarter of 1997.

In spite of better than expected figures from RMC, the buildings materials group, some concern over the weaker

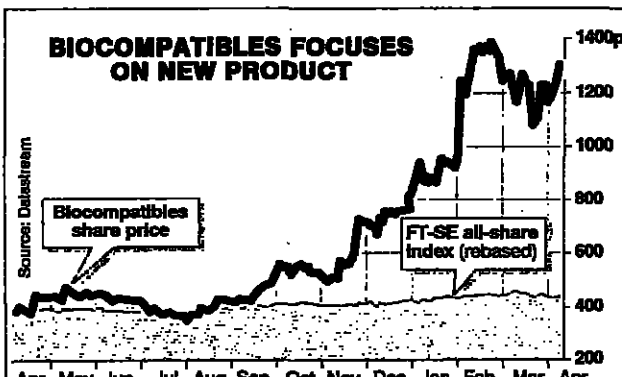
THE Prudential added 4½p to 568½p after announcing the sale of its Italian life business for £46 million. Analysts at Lehman Brothers rated the shares a "buy". The Pru's recently acquired stake in J Rothschild Assurance is seen as an attractive move that promises to yield further benefits.

parent company Biocompatibles a hefty boost. The shares soared to a trading high before ending at £13.75, level with its previous best and up 82½p. Talk of a £16 target price could fuel further rises.

Toiletries manufacturer Swallowfield, supplier of own-branded goods to retailers such as Marks & Spencer, rose 8½p to 226p after a 31 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to

German market pulled shares back to close down 4½p to 996½p. Tarmac, after its recent strength, also fell, dipping 3p to 113p.

News of another licensing deal for its flat panel loud-speaker technology lifted shares in Verity Group by 4½p to 514p. Verity's NXT subsidiary has signed a deal with Samsung, Korea's largest electronics company.



Biocompatibles share price

FT-SE all-share index (rebased)

COMMODITIES

ICE-LOR (London 400p)

CRUDE OILS (\$/barrel FOB)

Brent (Physical) 17.00 -0.30
Brent 15 day (May) 17.00 -0.45
Brent 15 day (June) 17.00 -0.40
WTI Intermediate (May) 14.20 -0.30
WTI Intermediate (June) 14.20 -0.30

PRODUCTS (\$/MT)

Spot CIP NW Europe (bromated delivery)

Premium Ultra Low Sulfur 164.20 -0.20
Catalytic Cracked 164.20 -0.20
Naphtha 80.10 -0.10
Sulfur 161.00 -0.10

PE FIBRES (GNI Ltd)

May 106.50-0.75
Jun 106.75-0.75
Jul 106.75-0.75
Aug 106.75-0.75
Sep 106.75-0.75
Oct 106.75-0.75
Nov 106.75-0.75
Dec 106.75-0.75
Jan 106.75-0.75
Feb 106.75-0.75
Mar 106.75-0.75

BRISTOL (Bristol)

May 17.75-12.25
Jun 17.75-12.25
Jul 17.75-12.25
Aug 17.75-12.25
Sep 17.75-12.25
Oct 17.75-12.25
Nov 17.75-12.25
Dec 17.75-12.25
Jan 17.75-12.25
Feb 17.75-12.25
Mar 17.75-12.25

Official (Volume per day)

Copper Cable 8/10mm 23.00-0.10
Copper Cable 10/12mm 23.00-0.10
Copper Cable 12/14mm 23.00-0.10
Copper Cable 14/16mm 23.00-0.10
Copper Cable 16/18mm 23.00-0.10
Copper Cable 18/20mm 23.00-0.10
Copper Cable 20/22mm 23.00-0.10
Copper Cable 22/24mm 23.00-0.10
Copper Cable 24/26mm 23.00-0.10
Copper Cable 26/28mm 23.00-0.10
Copper Cable 28/30mm 23.00-0.10

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Series May Aug Nov May Aug Nov

Mercury Asset Management benefited from a broker note switching from hold to buy. MAM added 19½p to £12.74, while Rathbone Brothers, the banking and stockbroking group, moved up 4½p to 324½p after announcing a 19 per cent profit increase. Commercial Union added 12p to 666p.

The oil sector again attracted attention. British Boreas jumped 30p to £13.70 after news of a new link with Vastar Resources in the Gulf of Mexico. Dana Petroleum was unchanged at 26p after bid speculation evaporated, while BP rose 2p to 695½p after an upbeat annual meeting statement.

Manchester United fell back 11½p to 643½p after its defeat in the semi-final first leg of the European Cup, and failure in its attempt to extend the season. Northern Leisure shimmied 9p higher to 240½p after its £1.5 million acquisition of a new dancing venue in Burnley, while Rank, which has won shareholder approval for a share buyback, dipped 2½p to 435½p.

Among retailers, House of Fraser was again sought, adding 6p to 165p, while MFI put on 3½p to 152½p. Bid whispers pushed Wickes 9p higher to 147½p.

CLA, the media group, rose 5p to 161½p after encouraging results, while Raxwood Minerals dipped 3p to 51p after further news on its rights issue. Bakyrchik Gold jumped 26p to 152p after winning shareholder approval to increase its stake in Bakyrchik Mining Venture.

RJB Mining continued to win followers, adding 45p to 440p after results earlier in the week. GILF-EDGED: Dealers reported a quiet day with little activity. Volumes were described as very thin, slipping below levels earlier this week to 37,000. The June series of the long gilt ended at £7.32 at £108 3/4.

At the short end Treasury 8 per cent 2000 was unchanged at £102 1/2 while Treasury 8 per cent 2015 closed down £3 1/2 at £102 1/2. NEW YORK: US stocks were narrowly mixed in early trading, with weakness in retail issues and further profit-taking in technology shares weighing on the market. At midday, the Dow Jones industrial average was down 0.75 at 6,563.08.

Closing Prices Page 31

LONDON FINANCIAL FUTURES

Period Open High Low Set Vol

109.05 109.05 108.28 108.28 3672

100.36 100.36 100.02 100.02 14720

100.21 100.21 99.22 99.22 1240

127.60 127.60 127.02 127.02 6915

127.53 127.53 127.10 127.10 1295

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MAJOR INDICES

New York (midday):
Dow Jones 6563.08 (+0.75)
S&P Composite 759.94 (+0.66)

Tokyo:
Nikkei Average 17485.75 (+217.62)

Hong Kong:
Hang Seng 12358.70 (+67.98)

Amsterdam:
EEX Index 733.47 (+5.22)

Sydney:
DAX 2392.9 (+3.7)

Frankfurt:
DAX 3351.49 (+7.97)

Singapore:
Straits 2087.27 (+15.93)

Brussels:
General 11864.13 (+7.44)

Paris:
CAC-40 2807.97 (+9.58)

Zurich:
SIX Gen 965.00 (+1.40)

London:
FTSE 100 2853.4 (+5.4)
FTSE 250 4213.2 (+20.9)
FTSE 350 4544.3 (+4.7)
FTSE 400 2125.1 (+8.9)
FTSE Europe 100 2170.1 (+4.03)
FTSE All-Share 2095.1 (+4.14)
FTSE Non Financials 2156.75 (+4.31)
FTSE Financials 1164.3 (+0.02)
FTSE Govt Secs 93.00 (+0.23)
SEAG Volume 705.0m
US\$ 1.6240 (+0.0012)
German Mark 2.7873 (+0.0004)
Exchange Index 99.3 (+0.1)
Bank of England official rate 4.00m
ECU 1.4193
ESDR 155.0 Feb (2.7%) Jan 1987-100
RPIX 154.5 Feb (2.9%) Jan 1987-100

RECENT ISSUES

Aurora Inv Trust 100 ...

Avalon Oil 90 ...

Avia Europe 129½ - 2

Bickerton 41½ ...

Cambridge Antibody 570 ...

Charterwell 150 ...

Close Bros Prot VCT 95 ...

Diagonal 321½ + 5½

Donatantonio 721½ ...

Harvey Nash 201½ - 3

Heal's 212½ ...

Helphire Group 115 ...

Murray VCT 2 (100) 102½ ...

Newcastle Ltd 136 - 2

Oxford Tech Ventures 95 ...

Pathfinder Properties 37½ ...

Presbury Leisure 2½ ...

Q Group 119½ - 1

Sibir Energy 15½ ...

Tooth Higgs 107½ ...

United Overseas Grp 60½ - 1

Whitehead Mann 145½ + 1

World Telecom 188 + 5

Worldsec 177 ...

RIGHTS ISSUES

Biocure n/p (9) 22½ ...

Cliveden n/p (75) 4½ - 1

Edge Prpts n/p (135) 15½ ...

JFK Oil & Gas n/p (34) 5½ - 1½

Parco n/p (300) 9½ ...

Saville Gordon n/p (55) ½ ...

MAJOR CHANGES

RISES:

Telecom 270p (+45p)

CPOL Aromas 117½p (+10p)

Rowlinson Secs 282½p (+15p)

Premier Farnell 482½p (+25p)

Laird 411½p (+13p)

Grand Met 501½p (+11p)

ST 442½p (+5p)

Net 645p (+12½p)

FALLS:

Sentry Farm 150p (-15p)

Fincham 325p (-20p)

Danika BS Sys 495p (-17½p)

Leopold J 475p (-15p)

Shield Diag 852½p (-10p)

Closing Prices Page 31

DOLLAR RATES

Australia 1.2804-1.2831

Austria 1.207-1.208

Belgium (Com) 35.39-35.43

Canada 1.2912-1.2912

Denmark 6.5388-6.5408

France 5.7710-5.7710

Germany 1.2162-1.2162

Hong Kong 7.4486-7.4486

Ireland 1.5400-1.5500

Japan 149.01-149.01

Korea 125.97-126.07

Malaysia 2.5043-2.5053

Netherlands 1.2162-1.2162

Norway 4.6474-4.6547

Spain 171.51-171.61

THE TIMES CITY DIARY

Vyner bares his soul

TONY VYNER rather let the side down when the triumvirate of the grocery world took to the stage at the Savoy Hotel. The outgoing managing director of Sainsbury was seated alongside Sir Alistair Grant, the former chairman of Safeway, and Lord MacLaurin of Knebworth, the retiring chairman of Tesco, at an open forum, hosted by the Grocery Benevolent Fund. Asked about their biggest disappointment, Lord MacLaurin cited his failed bid for Safeway. Sir Alistair said a failed bid "for a Scottish distillery".

Vyner, meanwhile, referred back to the opening of a store called Victor Value. There was "a great big bird" who would open the stores, he continued, wearing little more than a fur coat. His biggest regret? "That I never saw her naked."

Sorrell's spur

MARTIN SORRELL, 52, modestly attributes his success to "an acute attack of andropause". Hit by the male menopause at the age of 40, Sorrell was spurred on to start his own business.

Twelve years later, he is chief executive of WPP, the world's largest advertising and marketing services company. Interviewed in *Director* magazine, Sorrell cites his father, head of J.M. Stone, the electrical retailer, as his all-time hero.



Sorrell: "andropause"

Enlarged duties

NOW Laurence Isaacson has a rival when it comes to matters of waist. The deputy chairman of Groupe Chex Gérard has been ousted by Clare Whitely, the finance director of the restaurant business who has resigned to have a baby in June. Her departure brings the number of female finance directors in British quoted companies down to four. Croda, J. Sainsbury, BTR, and MFI stand alone now. Whitely was the woman who oversaw the group's £3.4 million acquisitions of the Livebait and St Quentin restaurants. Isaacson said: "We have been one of the few businesses lucky enough to have a finance director who is expanding as rapidly as the company is."

On the run

BEWARE, commuters arriving at Haslemere station tonight. Gareth David, former business journalist turned City PR man at College Hill, plans to plaster the station platform with posters proclaiming: "Help the man who saved your buffet cars, save the children at risk." In a bid to raise money for the NSPCC by running in the London Marathon, David's aim is to jog commuters' memories, reminding them of his victory over South West Trains last year.

STAFF at Camelot are celebrating their success after a flutter on the Grand National. Barred from taking part in the National Lottery, employees bet heavily on Monday's race — some tempted by an each-way punt on a horse called Camelot Knight — winning £10,000 in total.

MORAG PRESTON

ECONOMIC VIEW



ANATOLE KALETSKY

The truth about tax, spending and the standard of living

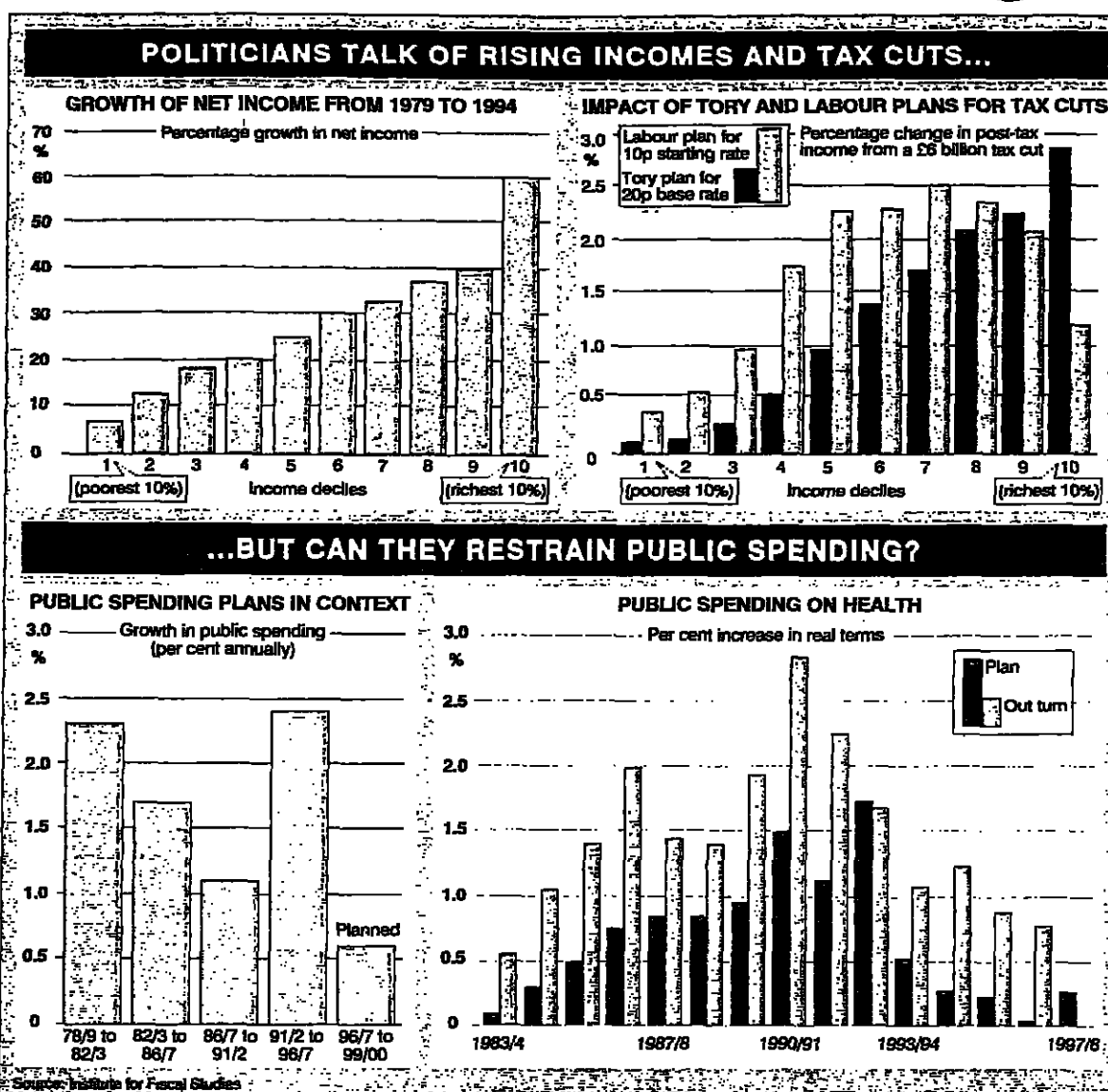
Even Labour seems to have fallen for the delusion that privatisation can pay for permanent tax cuts

If Britain's television companies took their public service broadcasting obligations really seriously, they would clear an hour of airtime by cancelling a few of their nightly brawls between slogging politicians and simply show a video of the brilliant hour-long presentation on the economic issues in the election delivered on Wednesday by the Institute for Fiscal Studies. The media moguls might find to their surprise that people were more interested in honest information and intelligent comment, simply and articulately presented, than the empty slogans which boringly monopolise the airwaves. But enough of fantasy. I do not own a TV station, so all I can do is try to summarise the salient points of the IFS study and urge readers who want more detail to get a copy of this excellent analysis from the IFS. Here are the most interesting points that struck me.

Taxes have gone up sharply by any conceivable measure since the last election and are now higher than they were in the last year of the last Labour government. All the huge cuts in income tax under the Tories — including the celebrated reduction in the top rate of tax from 83 per cent to 40 per cent — were offset by higher indirect taxes and National Insurance and cuts in allowances, especially for married people. In fact, despite the Tories' low-tax rhetoric, there has only been one year in the entire 18-year Tory period when the total tax burden, as a proportion of Gross Domestic Product, has been lower than it was in 1978-79, when Denis Healey was still "making the pips squeak".

What has fallen sharply under the Tories is public spending in relation to GDP. At 40 per cent of GDP, total public spending is now 2 per cent lower than it was in 1978-79. There are two explanations for the paradox that taxes have risen while public spending is taking a smaller slice of the national cake. The first is that the Tories have substantially reduced public borrowing. The second, and less well known, is that the Treasury's revenues from sources other than taxes have collapsed from 4.5 per cent of GDP in 1978-79 to 1.75 per cent. This loss of non-tax revenues, equivalent to £20 billion, is largely because of the removal from the public sector of hugely profitable industries such as telephones, electricity and gas (only partly offset by the exclusion from public spending of the losses of these businesses' financing requirements). In a week when even the Labour leadership seems to have fallen for the Tory delusion that one-off proceeds from privatisation can be used to pay for permanent tax cuts and public spending programmes, this is a timely reminder of the fact that selling off state assets is not a free lunch. Privatisation certainly tends to improve management and raise general economic efficiency, but for the Treasury it can also carry substantial costs.

Despite the clear rise in the tax burden since 1992, average living standards have risen. While the IFS cautions at the precise claim made by John Major that "the average family will be £1,100 better off than at the time of the last general election", its main objections are with the substance rather than the statistics. The statistical problem is that the Tories are comparing average real incomes in the



year before the last election (before the largely fraudulent 1992 tax cuts) with projected incomes in the coming year — squeezing six years of growth into a five-year parliament. But the more important objection is quite different.

Real incomes have grown in almost all five-year periods under all governments. In fact, income growth in the past five years has been much lower than in the last two Thatcher governments, although slightly better than in Lady Thatcher's first term. But anyway, can a government really claim that the steady increase in living standards that occurs as a consequence of natural economic growth is entirely due to its wise stewardship? Mr Major clearly thinks so. In the Personal Manifesto he wrote for Wednesday's *Times* he even claimed credit for the presence of "croissants in pavement cafes" and the availability of "sushi and exotic fruit in our supermarkets". But, as Christopher Giles, an IFS senior economist, said at the briefing on Wednesday, if Mr Major really believes that people must be mad to elect a government which has presided over a growing personal income, he must regard the outcome of the 1979 general election and the subsequent 18 years of Tory rule as a terrible mistake — for real incomes had also grown substantially between 1974 and 1979.

Moving on to the structure of incomes and taxation, the IFS study has many interesting stories to tell. Firstly, it confirms the dramatic increase in income inequality throughout the Tory period. The richest 10 per cent of households have enjoyed a 59 per cent increase in their real after-tax incomes, while the poorest 10 per cent have gained only 6 per cent (see top left chart). In cash terms, of course, the disparity has been very much larger, since each percentage point means far more money when it applies to a high income than to a meagre pittance. The IFS goes on to

examine the distributional effects of the "aspirations" for tax reform announced by the parties. Both leading parties now say that they want to cut income tax, but there are striking differences in the impact of these proposed cuts — differences remarkably congruent with the class make-up of their target groups of voters. The Tories' have a relatively small scheme to channel money to married couples with non-working wives, which will partly make up for the sharp increase in taxes these families have experienced since the late 1980s. Their most important policy, however, is to reduce the standard rate of income tax from 25p to 20p. This would concentrate the great bulk of the benefits among the relatively rich (as illustrated in the top right chart). The Labour aspiration to introduce a new 10p tax band would also help the rich more than the poor, but would produce the biggest benefits (at least in percentage terms). Only the Liberal plan, which would raise the top rate of income tax to 50p and increase personal allowances, would redistribute income from the rich to the poor.

The next question is whether any tax cuts are remotely likely in the next parliament, or whether the Liberals are right in insisting that taxes must rise. On this point, the IFS analysis makes even the Liberal warnings seem quite modest. They say that, while public borrowing in 1997-98 now looks likely to hit the target of 2.5 per cent of GDP announced by Kenneth Clarke in the last Budget, the further reductions in deficits planned for the years beyond that are in doubt. This is because the public spending plans on which the future deficit numbers depend are unrealistically low. Specifically, Mr Clarke has assumed that public spending will grow by just 0.6 per cent annually in real terms in each of the four years from 1996-97 to 1999-2000. Even for a Tory government these plans seem unrealistic, not to say fantastic, as the

IFS shows by comparing them with the spending growth recorded in the previous four Tory administrations. As shown in the lower chart, public spending grew by an average of 1.1 per cent annually even during the 1987-92 parliament, when growth was rapid. In the present parliament spending has grown by 2.4 per cent a year.

According to the IFS, there are two predominant reasons why spending is bound to grow faster in real terms than either of the main parties assumes. The first is the fact that a third of all public spending goes on wages and these inevitably rise in real terms when the economy is growing. The second is the ineluctable growth in health costs. It is simply impossible to restrain health spending growth to less than 1 per cent annually as Mr Clarke says he will do. The population is ageing, expensive new techniques are constantly being invented and, most importantly in the long-term, the general increase in economic prosperity naturally increases people's expectations about the quality of medical care. Politicians may claim to have all kinds of novel schemes to overcome these forces, but history suggests they should not be believed. As the bottom chart illustrates, government spending on health has massively overshot budget targets in 14 out of the past 15 years.

Finally, one point the IFS does not make. It does not say that public spending problems are caused by Britain's alleged "pensions crisis". On the contrary, it shows that state spending on pensions will decline substantially in the next century. The real problem is not that the state pension will become unaffordable, but simply that it will be too low for anyone to live on. This is a problem which the Government's plan to privatise the basic state pension does not even begin to recognise, much less to address. Election Briefing 1997, IFS, 7 Ridgmount Street, WC1E 7AE.

Britain's digital-TV drive faces delay

Britain's world-beating push to make digital-TV part of everyday life is losing momentum. There is more and more evidence the hundreds of film, sport and entertainment channels that it can provide will not be available before the end of the year.

BSkyB, the satellite broadcaster that has been digital TV's driving force, had hoped to launch a digital business by this autumn. The goal was to flood the high street electronics stores with digital set-top boxes, the devices that decode the satellite signals, before the Christmas buying spree.

The autumn deadline now appears ambitious and the City reckons the digital systems are more likely to be in place early next year. Any later would be disastrous because BSkyB wants to promote its digital sports channels before the summer of 1998 when France is to host football's World Cup, the biggest viewing event of the decade.

BSkyB, which is 40 per cent owned by News International, owner of *The Times*, has gone curiously quiet on its launch plans. Its last public comments were in February when it said it was on the verge of placing orders for as many as a million set-top boxes at a cost of £500 million or more.

But none of the potential set-top box makers — Amstrad and Pace Micro Technology, among them — has signed production contracts and time is running short if they are to be delivered well before Christmas. The companies have said it would take six to nine



Don Cruickshank, Ofcom's Director-General, wants to ensure fair competition

months to get the boxes to retailers. City analysts said they would be surprised if BSkyB hit the autumn target. Richard Dale, of Salomon Bros, the securities house, said: "There are a number of issues that need to be resolved, ranging from the set-top box subsidies to buying pay-per-view rights, which may or may not allow BSkyB to launch this year."

Matters began to bog down late last year when Ofcom, the telecommunications regulator, made it clear that it would set strict rules under which broadcasters gained access to the set-top boxes' conditional-systems — the technology that ensures that only paid-

up subscribers can receive the channels. Broadcasters such as the BBC feared that BSkyB, which is already dominant in the subscription-TV business, would go on to control the digital-TV market and dictate set-top box access on its own terms.

It was not until last month that the final access guidelines were published. Don Cruickshank, Ofcom's director-general, said that it would not tolerate any attempt to restrict access to the systems. "The goal is to ensure fair competition," he said. An even more crucial task was devising a scheme to subsidise the set-top boxes to allow a retail price of £200 or so, against a factory price of £500.

Experience has shown that subsidised boxes generate strong sales. In Germany and Italy, where the boxes are so expensive as to be considered luxury items, digital TV penetration is small.

BSkyB did not have the financial muscle to pay the whole subsidy bill and decided to recruit British Telecom, Midland Bank and Matsushita, the Japanese electronics maker, as partners. They are to form the Interactive Services Company (Isco) with BSkyB. Their collective investment, estimated at £400 million, will be used to subsidise the boxes over the next three years. In return, they are to share in the revenue generated by the interactive services, such as home banking.

People close to the talks to form Isco said disagreements have ranged from the level of investment that each investor is to contribute to the technical specifications of the boxes. Another problem arose in January when BSkyB, Carlton and Granada unveiled plans to launch a digital terrestrial TV company in 1998. The announcement made BT, Midland Bank and Matsushita wonder why BSkyB was backing two horses in the race.

It is understood that the biggest Isco hurdles have pretty much been resolved, but, as any seasoned negotiator knows, the devil is in the details. Couch potatoes should not get their hopes up for a 200-channel viewing bonanza by the autumn.

ERIC REGULY

PFI outlook is set fair whoever wins power

Jason Nissé reports on a Tory policy that until recently was the subject of derision

On the outskirts of Merseyside, construction is under way on a monument to a policy that was dreamed up by the Conservatives and is now becoming a cornerstone of the policies of the anticipated new Labour administration.

The £30 million prison at Fazakerley is one of three prisons being built under the Private Finance Initiative, a policy that has seen commercial companies funding more than £7 billion of government work in the four years since it was started.

Under the tight spending rules Kenneth Clarke, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, has imposed on Tory ministers, Fazakerley might not have been built without PFI. And given Labour's need to scrimp and save to stay within its spending plans, few can be surprised that Tony Blair is embracing a policy that only a couple of years ago was derided in parliament and in the business community.

"Governments around the world are finding it increasingly difficult to fund their infrastructure spending plans out of taxes," says Ian Watmore, head of government services at Andersen Consulting. "So they are getting the private sector to finance the upfront cost and the public pays for it over a number of years."

As a concept the PFI works much like the way that many companies — notably British Airways — contract a great deal of the task that they need to do but do not feel they are good at doing themselves. For instance, a newspaper group will not deliver its own papers.

Marks & Spencer does not make the ready meals it sells in its stores, and when you pay with a credit card it is often not your credit card company that processes the payment.

So why not give a third party the contract to, say, process payments to the Inland Revenue or to operate a tram service in Croydon or to build a prison in Merseyside?

The public sector found contracting out these large projects a little difficult at first. The civil servants were used to allocating a budget to a project, awarding it to a contractor and then paying the contractor the extra when there were the inevitable cost overruns. Now that the contractor was taking the risk, it had to be sure that there were no dangers lurking in the project, which led to long and tortuous negotiations.

"Both the public and private sector had to adapt to a different system of procurement," says Alan Chaney, head of projects at John Laing, the construction group. "We are now learning and this is starting to speed up the process."

In addition, there was an initial worry that the private sector would have trouble raising the finance to pay for the projects. But the feeling now is that a project of anything up to £500 million will be bankrolled with little difficulty, and that larger

projects should have no more trouble than the construction companies have in funding bid projects anyway — in other words, if the builder is any good and has a reasonable balance sheet it will get the money.

Within the area of information technology, one criticism of PFI has been the amount that has gone to just one firm, Electronic Data Systems, the US group, which has won around £300 million of the £400 million of outsourcing contracts awarded.

The concern, voiced by the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee last November, is that this has left government departments — particularly the Inland Revenue and Department of Social Security — too dependent on EDS. A number of large outsourcing contracts are pending, with a large Benefits Agency deal due to be awarded within weeks of a new government coming into power.

Within the private sector the belief is that where PFI has worked — and most mention roads and prisons — it is because there has been one body allocating all the contracts. Where it is still caught up in the mire or has hardly started at all — health and education come to mind — the government side has a highly devolved structure.

The health service is seen as the largest problem area. So far around £500 million of hospital contracts have been awarded, but this is just a handful of the projects outstanding.

There are more than 80 new tenders pending — from a ramp for Rotherham General Hospital to brand new hospitals in Durham, Barnet and Worcester.

Some of these have run into special difficulties when it was discovered that the charter for the National Health Service trusts did not allow them to authorise the projects.

Here Labour should actually speed the process. It is committed to taking away a great deal of the bureaucracy in the health service, and this is bound to mean amalgamating trusts.

Rees Griffiths, the deputy chief executive of the Private Finance Panel, says that this will help with the allocation and approval of projects. "The slowness of PFI in hospitals has been because the structure of the NHS does not make procurement easy," he said.

For Labour, PFI is not an ideology, as it was for the Tories, but a practical expedient. Where it saves money and makes financial sense Labour will do it. Where it is bringing in the private sector for the private sector's sake, Labour will say no.

Mr Griffiths expects a Labour government to be much more rigorous in deciding whether any project fits with its policy objectives before going ahead, but expects no letting up on the PFI bandwagon.

"The functionaries may have dropped their quills while the election is on, but it is only a slight hiatus and the contracts will start being signed again come May 2," Mr Griffiths said.

It is only a slight hiatus. The contracts will start being signed again come May 2

The European Parliament

announces that it has issued an open call for tenders relating to furniture for the bars and restaurants of the Espace Léopold building in Brussels, Rue Wiertz. The total contract, subdivided into lots, is for 588 tables, 2093 chairs, 60 screens, 4 service units, 6 sideboards and 2 drinks trolleys.

The notice to appear in the Official Journal of the European Communities was sent to the Office for Official Publications of the European Communities on 05/03/97

The contract conditions may be requested by fax sent to the attention of the Equipment Service, BAK Building, Room 4/67 at L-2929 Luxembourg Fax No (+352) 4300 4918 quoting reference "A. O Bars at restaurants"

The deadline for the submission of tenders is 30/04/97

Trade hit by slower growth in Asia

FROM A CORRESPONDENT IN GENEVA

GROWTH in world goods trade, hit by a slowdown in Asian economies and continuing low demand in Western Europe, dropped to 4 per cent last year from 8 per cent, the World Trade Organisation annual review has reported.

However, the WTO predicted a modest increase this year over the 1996 performance if an expected overall recovery in the two key regions was confirmed. The report found Latin America, with a growth in export volume of 11 per cent, led by a strong 20 per cent surge from Mexico, and North America with 5.5 per cent, running well ahead of the global average.

The study, based on preliminary figures, described Asia's export growth of only 2.5 per cent as surprising. It was the lowest among world regions and was well down on the 5 per cent output growth for the Asian area.

Around the world, trade growth has consistently outpaced output growth over the past decade. But Richard Blackhurst, chief economist of the WTO, said that he saw the decline in Asia as cyclical. He added: "I see no fundamental change in Asian economies that would have caused it."

The global growth percentage was 3 per cent lower than that the WTO predicted early last year, and 1 per cent down on a forecast it issued last December at its ministerial meeting in Singapore. Also down was the growth rate of the American dollar value of trade in commercial services, from banking and insurance to transport and tourism, which dropped to about 5 per cent from 14 per cent.

Compiled by WTO economic analysts, the report noted that last year's growth in goods trade volume was in line with the average for the first four years of the decade.



Tony Wardell, says the restructuring last year has allowed Swallowfield to re-present its capabilities to big customers across Europe

Go-ahead for £2.5bn North Sea gasfields

BY MARTIN BARROW

THE North Sea oil industry received an important boost yesterday when the Government approved the development of three gasfields at an estimated total cost of about £2.5 billion.

The Department of Trade and Industry gave its consent for the £1.5 billion development of the Elgin and Franklin gas condensate fields by Elf Aquitaine, of France, the operator.

Consent was also given for the £714 million development of the Shearwater gas condensate field in the central North Sea by Shell UK Exploration and Production (Shell Expro), operator for Shell, Esso and a number of other companies.

Lord Fraser of Carmyllie, the Energy Minister, also gave

approval for the construction of a pipeline linking the three neighbouring fields, located about 143 miles east of Aberdeen, to an existing terminal at Bacton, Norfolk. The pipeline, named the Shearwater and Elgin Area Line (SEAL), will be the longest on the UK continental shelf at 288 miles.

From Bacton the gas will be sent to the TransCo National Transmission System (NTS) and to Europe through the Bacton to Zeebrugge interconnector pipeline. Construction is expected to begin in 1998 with first gas expected to flow in 2000.

The developments are likely to provide millions of pounds of work for British companies, particularly for shipyards in

the North East of England. About 80 per cent of the contracts are expected to be awarded to UK companies.

The field's facilities are being developed by an alliance formed by Amec, the UK construction company, and Heerema. The design, construction and installation contracts for the platform are worth £350 million.

The main part of the work will be carried out at Amec's yard in Wallsend, Tyneside, and Heerema's yard in Harlepool, while the main substructure is being made at Heerema's yard in The Netherlands. A separate £20 million contract for the design and construction of the well-head jacket was awarded to

SLP Engineering Teesside last October.

□ Ranger Oil, the North American energy company with substantial UK interests, has agreed to acquire an additional 20 per cent interest in the Ranger-operated Kyle oil discovery from Mobil North Sea. The extra interest increases Ranger's total holding to 40 per cent.

The Kyle discovery has produced oil from three wells during tests undertaken last year. This year Ranger will conduct extended well tests similar to those used in the appraisal of the Pierce and Banff fields, also in the North Sea. If the appraisal programme is successful, production could begin in 1999.

Cosmetics group aided by facelift

BY FRASER NELSON

POPULARITY of make-up pencils and shaving gel helped Swallowfield, the cosmetics and toiletries producer, to return its strongest results in 1996.

The company, Europe's largest producer of cosmetic pencils, reaped the benefits of its restructuring last year as pre-tax profits rose 31 per cent to £3.52 million on sales ahead 17 per cent to £43.4 million.

Tony Wardell, managing director, said: "Restructuring has not only helped us to put our house in better working order, but has provided us with the perfect opportunity to re-present our capabilities to major customers across Europe."

The success of cosmetic gift sets resulted in the strongest year so far for its pencil production factory, which lifted production 21 per cent over the year, and sales by 26 per cent, to £14.2 million.

The company spent £2 million on production improvements over the year, and took on an extra 100 workers mostly in middle management — to lift its total workforce to 800.

The advance of shaving gel over shaving foam helped its aerosols division to lift sales 19 per cent to £26.2 million.

Overall earnings were 18.1p (13.3p) a share. A final dividend of 4.3p, due on May 30, lifts the final to 7.3p (6.5p).

US approval lifts Biocompatibles

THE market value of Biocompatibles International headed towards £900 million yesterday after the medical coatings company secured US approval for its soft contact lens. Biocompatibles plans to launch its Proclear Compaibles lens almost immediately, after its launch in the UK and northern Europe in February. The lens is intended to be replaced monthly, and is coated with the Biocompatibles biomimetic PC coating, which offers greater resistance to dehydration and the formation of deposits.

The company sold only £5 million of lenses last year, but its shares have risen strongly because of the numerous potential uses of PC. Yesterday, the shares added another 67½p to reach £13.60. Biocompatibles has already assembled a US marketing team of 38 people. The company said that the soft lens market in the US was worth \$800 million, and frequent replacement lenses were one of the fastest growing segments.

Rathbones advances

RATHBONE BROTHERS, the investment manager and private banker, lifted pre-tax profit to £9.6 million in 1996 (£7.4 million). Earnings were swelled by the purchase of Neilson Cobbold, the Liverpool fund manager. The combined group manages £4 billion. Turnover was £35.8 million (£28 million). Earnings per share were 24.9p (21.3p). A final dividend of 7.5p is due on May 16, making 11.5p for the year (10p). Mickey Ingall, chief executive, will succeed Oliver Stanley as chairman on May 7.

Irish relief on inflation

IRISH CENTRAL BANK worries about inflationary pressures in the Republic's booming economy were soothed yesterday with the announcement that consumer prices in March rose just 0.1 per cent. The Central Statistics Office figures show that inflation over the 13 months since February 1996 was running at 1.6 per cent, well below the Government target. The March figures show that increases in the cost of clothing and footwear were offset by a fall in the price of fuel and lighting.

Media buyer confident

CIA GROUP, Europe's second largest independent media buyer, said it was confident that it could become one of the world's top six industry players within four years. The company posted a 12 per cent rise in pre-tax profits before exceptional items, to £7.5 million, on turnover of £774 million, up 28 per cent, in the year to December 31. After exceptional items, pre-tax profits came to £4.9 million, or 3.23p (7.65p) a share. A final dividend of 1.77p makes a total of 2.35p, up 9 per cent.

AIB stake in Poland

ALLIED IRISH BANKS has acquired a 9.4 per cent interest in Poland's Wielkopolski Bank Kredytowy (WBK) from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) for £18.9 million. AIB said that the transaction was part of an option agreement it has with EBRD, giving it the right to acquire EBRD's 23.9 per cent stake in WBK. The option is being exercised in two stages, with AIB to bid for the rest of EBRD's shares in WBK soon.

Avocet buys Damar

AVOCET, the gold mining group, is to pay £2.3 million in shares for a 60 per cent controlling interest in Damar Consolidated Exploration, the Malaysian company. Avocet has also taken an option over a further 36.8 per cent of Damar that can be exercised at any time over the next two years. Avocet is issuing 1.1 million ordinary shares to pay for the stake. Avocet shares remained unchanged at 21p after the announcement.

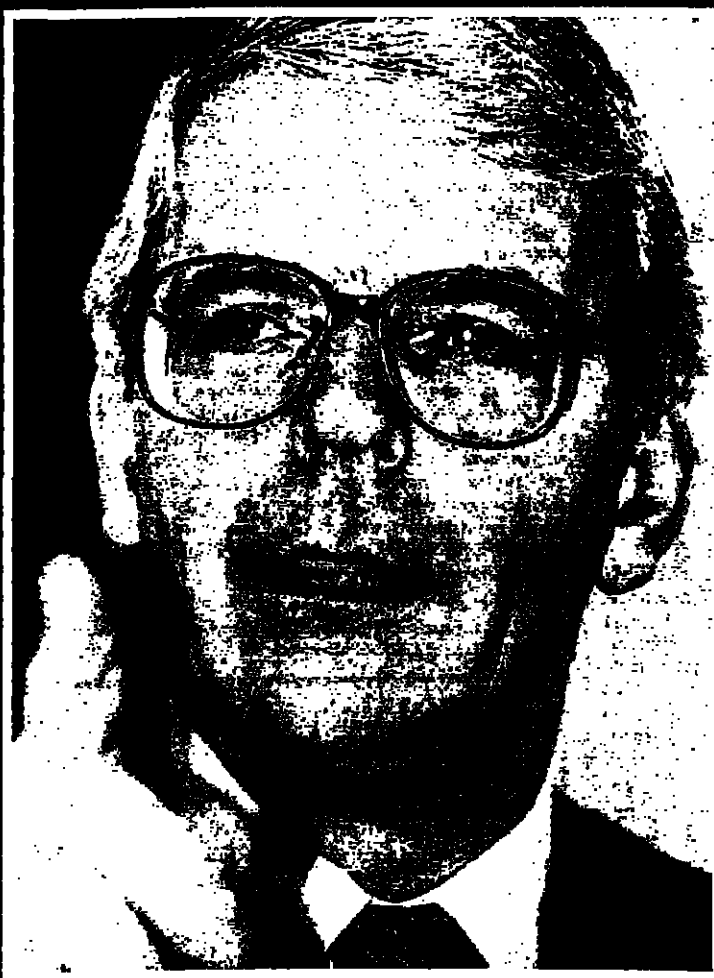
Tracker Network ahead

TRACKER NETWORK, maker of stolen vehicle tracking devices, yesterday announced its first annual profit of £210,000 before tax, reversing a previous loss of £1.6 million in 1995. The AIM-quoted company reported a 22 per cent increase in turnover to £10.4 million. Tracker said the police have made more than 650 arrests by using their system. Ralph Kanter, the chairman, said that he expects the company to pay its first dividend this year.

THE SUNDAY TIMES

ELECTION 97 READER FORUM

YOUR CHANCE TO MEET JOHN MAJOR



Next Tuesday is your chance to tell John Major what you think about his government. You can also ask him what he would do with five more years in power. This is a unique opportunity for readers of The Times and The Sunday Times to have a say in the general election campaign with the most powerful man in the country.

The Prime Minister will speak for about 20 minutes before answering questions from the audience. The event, to be held in central London on Tuesday, April 15, will take place between 8pm and 9.30pm.

Tickets, which must be booked in advance, are £10 each (£7.50 for students, pensioners and unemployed). To book your tickets simply telephone First Call on 0171-420 0000. Lines are open 24 hours. There is no booking fee. All major credit and payment cards are accepted.

Japanese bank plans US alliance

FROM A CORRESPONDENT IN TOKYO

NIPPON Credit Bank, the heavily indebted Japanese financial institution, is forming an alliance with America's Bankers Trust, which has agreed to securitise some of its loans, turning them into stocks or bonds that are sold to outside investors.

The tie-up will also enable NCB to maintain services to its customers after its planned withdrawal from overseas business, the two banks said. NCB said that it would also consider a capital tie-up with Bankers Trust, which is on an expansion drive.

NCB, with a heavy load of real estate loans left from the asset bubble of the 1980s, has been considered the most endangered large bank in Japan's faltering banking sector. On April 1 it announced that it was retreating from the international arena and that it was selling prime real estate and floating new shares to try to rebuild its capital base.

The Tokyo stock market took the news well, with an increase in buying interest in the debentures that NCB uses to raise the bulk of its cash.

Rentals in America boost Hertz

HERTZ, the car rental division of Ford, posted record profits of \$19.7 million in the first quarter of 1997, more than double the \$8.8 million for the same period last year. The increase was mainly because of higher revenues in its US car rental operations, Hertz said.

The company, the largest car rental business in the world, achieved record revenues of \$878.4 million in the first quarter, up \$75.3 million from the same period last year.

It said revenues from its car rental operations were \$758.5 million, up \$67.8 million, as the number of transactions and revenue per transaction increased, mainly in the US market.

Invite T.S. Eliot to read to your English class.

<http://www.tes.co.uk>

Whatever you think you can do on the Internet, you probably can — if you know where to start. But it's a very big 'if'.

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TES

THE TIMES EDUCATIONAL SUPPLEMENT

INTERNET SERVICE YOU CAN'T AFFORD TO IGNORE IT

Shares show modest gains

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	PE
ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES						
400	397	Alco. Dist. Co.	397	-3	-0.8	12.1
110	109	Alco. Dist. Co.	109	-1	-0.9	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
BANKS						
400	397	Alco. Dist. Co.	397	-3	-0.8	12.1
110	109	Alco. Dist. Co.	109	-1	-0.9	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
BREWERS, PUBS & REST.						
400	397	Alco. Dist. Co.	397	-3	-0.8	12.1
110	109	Alco. Dist. Co.	109	-1	-0.9	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS						
400	397	Alco. Dist. Co.	397	-3	-0.8	12.1
110	109	Alco. Dist. Co.	109	-1	-0.9	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
ELECTRICITY						
400	397	Alco. Dist. Co.	397	-3	-0.8	12.1
110	109	Alco. Dist. Co.	109	-1	-0.9	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
ELECTRONIC & ELECT.						
400	397	Alco. Dist. Co.	397	-3	-0.8	12.1
110	109	Alco. Dist. Co.	109	-1	-0.9	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
ENGINEERING						
400	397	Alco. Dist. Co.	397	-3	-0.8	12.1
110	109	Alco. Dist. Co.	109	-1	-0.9	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
HOUSEHOLD GOODS						
400	397	Alco. Dist. Co.	397	-3	-0.8	12.1
110	109	Alco. Dist. Co.	109	-1	-0.9	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
INSURANCE						
400	397	Alco. Dist. Co.	397	-3	-0.8	12.1
110	109	Alco. Dist. Co.	109	-1	-0.9	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
INVESTMENT TRUSTS						
400	397	Alco. Dist. Co.	397	-3	-0.8	12.1
110	109	Alco. Dist. Co.	109	-1	-0.9	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
LONGS (over 15 years)						
400	397	Alco. Dist. Co.	397	-3	-0.8	12.1
110	109	Alco. Dist. Co.	109	-1	-0.9	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
SHORTS (under 5 years)						
400	397	Alco. Dist. Co.	397	-3	-0.8	12.1
110	109	Alco. Dist. Co.	109	-1	-0.9	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
UNLISTED						
400	397	Alco. Dist. Co.	397	-3	-0.8	12.1
110	109	Alco. Dist. Co.	109	-1	-0.9	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
INDEX-LINKED (on projected value)						
400	397	Alco. Dist. Co.	397	-3	-0.8	12.1
110	109	Alco. Dist. Co.	109	-1	-0.9	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	PE
ENGINEERING, VEHICLES						
400	397	Alco. Dist. Co.	397	-3	-0.8	12.1
110	109	Alco. Dist. Co.	109	-1	-0.9	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
FOOD MANUFACTURERS						
400	397	Alco. Dist. Co.	397	-3	-0.8	12.1
110	109	Alco. Dist. Co.	109	-1	-0.9	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
HEALTHCARE						
400	397	Alco. Dist. Co.	397	-3	-0.8	12.1
110	109	Alco. Dist. Co.	109	-1	-0.9	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
LEISURE & HOTELS						
400	397	Alco. Dist. Co.	397	-3	-0.8	12.1
110	109	Alco. Dist. Co.	109	-1	-0.9	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
Mining						
400	397	Alco. Dist. Co.	397	-3	-0.8	12.1
110	109	Alco. Dist. Co.	109	-1	-0.9	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
PROPERTY						
400	397	Alco. Dist. Co.	397	-3	-0.8	12.1
110	109	Alco. Dist. Co.	109	-1	-0.9	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
TELECOMMUNICATIONS						
400	397	Alco. Dist. Co.	397	-3	-0.8	12.1
110	109	Alco. Dist. Co.	109	-1	-0.9	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
TEXTILES & APPAREL						
400	397	Alco. Dist. Co.	397	-3	-0.8	12.1
110	109	Alco. Dist. Co.	109	-1	-0.9	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
RETAILERS, FOOD						
400	397	Alco. Dist. Co.	397	-3	-0.8	12.1
110	109	Alco. Dist. Co.	109	-1	-0.9	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
RETAILERS, GENERAL						
400	397	Alco. Dist. Co.	397	-3	-0.8	12.1
110	109	Alco. Dist. Co.	109	-1	-0.9	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
WATER						
400	397	Alco. Dist. Co.	397	-3	-0.8	12.1
110	109	Alco. Dist. Co.	109	-1	-0.9	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
ALTERNATIVE INV. MARKET						
400	397	Alco. Dist. Co.	397	-3	-0.8	12.1
110	109	Alco. Dist. Co.	109	-1	-0.9	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1
100	99	Alco. Dist. Co.	99	-1	-1.0	12.1

High	Low	Company	Price	Change	%	PE
64 1/2	54 1/2	Alco. Dist. Co.	54 1/2	-1 1/2	-2.8	12.1
100	99 1/2	Alco. Dist. Co.	99 1/2	-1/2	-0.5	12.1
100	99 1/2	Alco. Dist. Co.	99 1/2	-1/2	-0.5	12.1
100	99 1/2	Alco. Dist. Co.	99 1/2	-1/2	-0.5	12.1
100	99 1/2	Alco. Dist. Co.	99 1/2	-1/2	-0.5	12.1
100	99 1/2	Alco. Dist. Co.	99 1/2	-1/2	-0.5	12.1
100	99 1/2	Alco. Dist. Co.	99 1/2	-1/2	-0.5	12.1
100	99 1/2	Alco. Dist. Co.	99 1/2	-1/2	-0.5	12.1
100	99 1/2	Alco. Dist. Co.	99 1/2	-1/2	-0.5	12.1
100	99 1/2	Alco. Dist. Co.	99 1/2	-1/2	-0.5	12.1
100	99 1/2	Alco. Dist. Co.	99 1/2	-1/2	-0.5	12.1
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100	99 1/2	Alco. Dist. Co.	99 1/2	-1/2	-0.5	12.1
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100	99 1/2	Alco. Dist. Co.	99 1/2	-1/2	-0.5	12.1
100	99 1/2	Alco. Dist. Co.	99 1/2	-1/2	-0.5	12.1
100	99 1/2	Alco. Dist. Co.	99 1/2	-1/2	-0.5	12.1
100	99 1/2	Alco. Dist. Co.	99 1/2	-1/2	-0.5	12.1
100	99 1/2	Alco. Dist. Co.	99 1/2	-1/2	-0.5	12.1
100	99 1/2	Alco. Dist. Co.	99 1/2	-1/2	-0.5	12.1
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100	99 1/2	Alco. Dist. Co.	99 1/2	-1/2	-0.5	12.1
100	99 1/2	Alco. Dist. Co.	99 1/2	-1/2	-0.5	12.1
100	99 1/2	Alco. Dist. Co.	99 1/2	-1/2	-0.5	12.1
100	99 1/2	Alco. Dist. Co.	99 1/2	-1/2	-0.5	12.1
100	99 1/2	Alco. Dist. Co.	99 1/2	-1/2	-0.5	12.1
100	99 1/2	Alco. Dist. Co.	99 1/2	-1/2	-0.5	12.1
100	99 1/2	Alco. Dist. Co.	99 1/2	-1/2	-0.5	12.1
100	99 1/2	Alco. Dist. Co.	99 1/2	-1/2	-0.5	12.1
100	99 1/2	Alco. Dist. Co.	99 1/2	-1/2	-0.5	12.1
100	99 1/2	Alco. Dist. Co.	99 1/2	-1/2	-0.5	12.1
100	99 1/2	Alco. Dist. Co.	99 1/2	-1/2	-0.5	12.1
100	99 1/2	Alco. Dist. Co.	99 1/2	-1/2	-0.5	12.1
100	99 1/2	Alco. Dist. Co.	99 1/2	-1/2	-0.5	12.1
100	99 1/2	Alco. Dist. Co.	99 1/2	-1/2	-0.5	12.1
100	99 1/2	Alco. Dist. Co.	99 1/2	-1/2	-0.5	12.1
100	99 1/2	Alco. Dist. Co.	99 1/2	-1/2	-0.5	12.1
100	99 1/2	Alco. Dist. Co.	99 1/2	-1/2	-0.5	12.1
100	99 1/2	Alco. Dist. Co.	99 1/2	-1/2	-0.5	12.1
100	99 1/2	Alco. Dist. Co.	99 1/2	-1/2	-0.5	12.1
100	99 1/2	Alco. Dist. Co.	99 1/2	-1/2	-0.5	12.1
100	99 1/2	Alco. Dist. Co.	99 1/2	-1/2	-0.5	12.1
100	99 1/2	Alco. Dist. Co.	99 1/2	-1/2	-0.5	12.1
100	99 1/2	Alco. Dist. Co.	99 1/2	-1/2	-0.5	12.1
100	99 1/2	Alco. Dist. Co.	99 1/2	-1/2	-0.5	12.1
100	99 1/2	Alco. Dist. Co.	99 1/2	-1/2	-0.5	12.1
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■ VISUAL ART

The roots of Picasso's originality are revealed in a revelatory Washington show



■ THEATRE 1

Electioneering, Flaubert-style: Paul Godfrey's *The Candidate* completes a master's fragment

THE TIMES ARTS



■ THEATRE 2

Bernard Levin visits *Waste* at the Old Vic, and finds sleazy relevance in every line



■ THEATRE 3

In Dublin the Gate continues its Pinter festival with a fine revival of *The Collection*

La vie in blue and rose

VISUAL ART: Isabel Carlisle visits a stunning exhibition in Washington of paintings by the young Picasso

The exhibition of Picasso's early paintings that has just opened in Washington is one of the most revelatory shows to be seen this year. It explores, for the first time on such a broad scale, the roots of his originality, and his progression from gifted adolescent to the status of exceptional artist gives it an impetus that raises it above the biographical.

Throughout Picasso's adolescence and late teens, it is something of a game to spot which artist he is imitating and then discarding. It must have been a game, albeit serious, to Picasso too. He takes on the Spanish Old Masters: Goya, Velázquez, Ribera, Murillo and (most importantly) El Greco; and then the more recent masters: Manet, Steinlen, Toulouse-Lautrec, Corot, Aubrey Beardsley, Kirschner, Burne-Jones, Van Gogh, Puvis de Chavannes. One by one, he explores their art and subject matter, their possibilities and limitations, but it is not until he gets into the Blue Period, around 1901, that we see Picasso thinking for himself.

The Blue Period paintings have been dismissed as facile and self-indulgent, wallowing in a depressive milieu of prostitutes and beggars. On the contrary, this was a crucial phase for Picasso. The draining out of colour until only the blues are left and the concentration on line left him free to construct the intellectual armature of his art. There is no reason to doubt Picasso's misery. He was poor, sometimes ill, his paintings were barely selling, and his friend Casagemas committed suicide in 1901. Unable to consummate an affair with Germaine Gargallo, a girl with whom Picasso had set him up, Casagemas shot himself in the head after having tried, unsuccessfully, to shoot her. Out of feelings of guilt or compassion, Picasso evolved *La Vie*, with Casagemas as its central figure.

Paradoxically, the ambiguity of this work is its key, and the key for much of the Blue Period. Although the composition is awkward, and the nature of the confrontation between Casagemas with his naked mistress standing on the left, and the tall, stern mother and baby standing on the right, is unresolved, Picasso demonstrates here for the first time the essential quality of his inspiration. Set in the studio (two canvases propped against the back wall depict Gauguin-like figures of crouching women), *La Vie* is as much a painting about painting as about the cycle of life, or Casagemas, or impotence. John Richardson, whose second volume of *A Life of Picasso* was recently published, has pointed out that Picasso and his poet friend Max Jacob were fascinated by tarot cards, and the element of chance they impose on everyday life. Something

of this mystical belief now entered Picasso's mind and his art.

From here onwards, into Cubism and beyond, Picasso uses this ambiguity — the apparently random combination of images in a painting — to invest his works with an inspired authority. Picasso claimed that this art of combining was something that he did almost unconsciously, but the exhibition makes apparent how he built up his armoury of visual sources: first by taking from other artists, then by using his own life as subject matter, then by pushing backwards through time to the ancient Greeks and Egyptians as well as early Iberia, and then by using all this to take art forward.

While forging his own art, Picasso was relatively unaffected by Fauvism and the influence of Cézanne. His constant toings and froings between Paris and Barcelona, until he settled in the Bateau-Lavoir studio in Montmartre in 1904, tied him to no particular style. In the Bateau-Lavoir, Picasso met another artist, Fernande Olivier, who was to be his mistress until 1912. Her arrival coincided with a change in Picasso's palette as he entered the Rose Period and began to paint some of his most beautiful and mysterious works.

As a prelude Picasso excluded colour almost entirely. The superb etching *The Frugal Repast*, of a young but emaciated couple with thin, attenuated limbs and eloquent hands, is hatched all over with the most delicate lines. The same physiognomy, and the blindness of the man, is repeated in *Woman Ironing*, an oil painting in shades of grey with hatched brushstrokes. The angularity of her pose is brutal, but there is a tenderness here that replaces the sentimentality of the works in blue. The pinks that arrive with Fernande and the pictures of harlequins are more like pale terracotta. At the same time, a young child in a twisting Renaissance pose appears in *Harlequin's Family with an Ape*.

The *Boy with a Pipe*, his head wreathed in roses, and the *Woman with a Fan*, viewed in profile with one hand held up in a hieratic gesture from an Assyrian relief, are the first masterpieces of the Rose Period. With these introspective, androgynous adolescents, Picasso masters the psychological intensity needed to animate the monumental nudes that came out of the summer of 1906 that Picasso and Fernande spent in Gósol, in the Spanish Pyrenees. From Gósol also came the mask-like faces that Picasso gave to his portrait of Gertrude Stein and his self-portrait (with which this exhibition ends).

Despite the beauty of many of the paintings, we can see that Picasso, up



Picasso's *La Vie* (1903), after the suicide of his friend Casagemas, contains the key to his Blue Period

to this point, was not so much interested in handling paint as ideas. Lapses in taste and botched compositions are forgivable because they are problems without which no advances could be made. We know that the evolution of Picasso's art, from the unexceptional oil sketch of *The Little*

Picador, at age 11, to the end of the Rose Period, when Picasso was 25, promises much more. Immediately on the horizon is the *Demoiselles d'Avignon* (finished in November 1907), which has been seen as the beginning of Modernism — the first painting of 20th-century art.

● Picasso: The Early Years, 1892-1906 is at the National Gallery of Art, Washington DC until July 21, sponsored by Bell Atlantic (202 842 6713 for details of advance entry passes). Then at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Sept 10 to Jan 4 1998. Nearly 30 of these paintings are only to be seen on the Washington leg. The exhibition is not travelling to Europe.

Not such a Tory canyon

SECOND OPINION: The human politics of *Waste* resonate with Bernard Levin over 90 years

First things first. Sir Peter Hall has taken the Old Vic (believe it or not, there was a cabbie who had not heard of it), and the omens are good. Indeed they are splendid: the night I went, the Vic was packed solid, with not a seat empty.

Hall is offering a dozen plays — some well known, some new — from mid-March to early November. I salute him, and wish him well.

The first play is *Waste*, by Granville Barker, published first in 1907, and instantly banned by the Lord Chamberlain. (Young people must prepare to gasp: there was a character with that name, and no play could be put on in Britain without the Lord Chamberlain's seal: it lasted until 1968.)

Now for the fun. *Waste* is a play about politics: to be exact, Tory politics. To be even more exact, the play is about Tory sleaze, Tory booze, Tory liars, Tory fornication, Tory money and plain Tory crooks.

For instance... "the Tories... have a clever plan to trash the Liberals for years to come by stealing items of their traditional programme..." No doubt the Tories would do such things, but those words were actually written in 1907.

Again, "Major is standing on a knife-edge Parliament without a working majority?" Who? Why, John Major, of course. No, not Major, but a gentleman who says: "The ruling oligarchy is contemptuous of the electorate and terrified of public opinion..." Who said it? Granville Barker, in 1907.

Ah, but the best is to come.

The Tory leader is expected to be called to form a government... "but he is threatened by a devastating sexual scandal". (Actually, several devastating sexual scandals.)

But now I have had my

fun. Granville Barker was a playwright of considerable quality; his finest work was *The Madras House*. Yet he is passed over: I don't remember when a Granville Barker play was last seen in the first-rank theatre. (You may say that George Bernard Shaw is in the dusk, but he, certainly, will come back.)

Hall surely chose *Waste* because it was election year: I don't know whether it was to be amazed by politicians, or to despise them. Probably both. At least Granville Barker had his tongue in his

cheek when he discussed politicians: "We poor politicians must work double shifts for our bread-and-butter while we are in opposition. It's hardly safe when you are in office to hold on to a share — much less a directorship."

How's the wretched capitalist to live? But today, there are almost no wry smiles at all when the conversation turns to serious politics. *Waste* is well named. Hall sums up with: "It demonstrated that there was little place for ideals in politics: what mattered was the possible — and more than that, the deal that made the possible, possible."

Come back to the play. There is the fly-by-night girl who dies under the illegal knife; there is much accidental irony in this story, because today an abortion is hardly more than a haircut.

Waste is surely what it means. A death or two; a twist of the coroner's wrist; one shoddy politician and another one; how close 1907 is to 1997? What's the difference today? The scandal is soothed away. Someone says *phew*, and all is over. And all is quiet, too.

When I was 17 I wanted, seriously, to be a politician, and indeed to sit in the House of Commons. By 19, I had dropped the idea, but sometimes, looking back, I shudder in my sleep.

THEATRE: Paul Godfrey's timely political satire, a long way after Flaubert; plus marital complexities in a powerful Pinter revival

Vote for Donald Duck

The parliamentary candidate at the core of Paul Godfrey's play is a moderate. He is also, he says, a realist and a pragmatist. He tries to please the Right and the Left, and when he is accused of being all things to all men, asks why he should have fixed opinions at all. "I am prepared to embrace contradictions. I believe in political relativism."

In other words, this is a candidate highly likely to succeed on May 1. But Godfrey's would-be parliamentarian is a rich bourgeois called Rousselin, and is standing in a by-election in the France of 1870. A would-be dramatist called Gustave Flaubert invented the character, but abandoned the drama he had provisionally titled *Le Candidat*.

The Candidate
Royal Exchange,
Manchester

"I wrote a new play, the one I would have liked him to have written," explains Godfrey in the programme. That is a worthy aim and a timely ambition. But the result reminding me of a cartoon projected at too high a speed. What might be a telling neo-Jonsonian satire bangs along in so hectic a way you sometimes wonder if Donald Duck isn't standing against Speedy Gonzales.

James Saxon's Rousselin is a bearded hulk in a green jacket but, mentally speaking, a vast empty space. He is also



James Saxon as the heavyweight contender, Rousselin

surrounded by corrupt, self-serving people. A penniless aristocrat will deliver the ploughman's vote if his dim son gets Rousselin's daughter in exchange, and when this offer is disdained, decides to stand for Parliament himself. A grumpy "old leftie" called

Gruchet will withdraw his candidature only if Rousselin cancels a long-standing debt. And a spread of citizens gathers in Rousselin's garden, demanding everything from the abolition of tax on booze to ponies for their children. The funniest scene comes

early in the second act, when Saxon prepares for "Question Time" in the local marketplace by practising his ultra-sophisticated sneers and proto-Churchillian rhetoric. But then it's back to the hustings hubbub, with the same citizens relaunching their selfish demands and exposing Rousselin as a chap who would endorse the compulsory sale of grannies, starting with his own, if it served his purpose.

Such a picture wouldn't be complete without a little sexual sleaze and a bit of newspaper manipulation. Both duly come in the form of an editor who rewrites Rousselin's idiocies ("we won't let reality stand in our way") in order to seduce his wife. Energy is not lacking either in Godfrey's text or in Braham Murray's cast. But the evening could be wittier, and might be more scathing if both men gave themselves time to pause and probe.

Still, the final image is effective enough. I don't think I'm betraying impenetrable secrets if I reveal that left-wing

envy and right-wing greed combine to give the protagonist a win. And how does he react when his supporters launch into jubilant yells of "Vote Rousselin"? Why, with a panicky mumble of: "But I

don't know what to do now." I suspect there will be British MPs privately saying much the same, come May 2.

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE

On page 36:
literature,
music, dance,
and a profile
of the new man
at the ICA

Pinter through the looking glass

Something has happened. But then again, maybe it hasn't. Not much more than this is clear after 55 minutes in the company of Harold Pinter's *The Collection*, the short, intricate, witty and malevolent work that kicks off the second instalment of the Gate's festival of the playwright's work.

A husband (played by Gerard McSorley) feels that his wife may have been involved in some bedroom-hopping in a hotel in Leeds. He seeks out the man he suspects of inspiring her bout of adultery, only

to discover his marriage mirrored in the complicated, disjointed relationship of Frank McCusker's rickety, selfish Bill, and Pinter's own supportive but acid Harry.

If Pinter's mirroring is brash at the macro level, up close it verges on slapstick. While Ingrid Craigie's feline Stella reclines on a snowy, polar couch, stroking a tiny white kitten, the boys play white kittens, dangling them nonchalantly or spraying out lines about grasping them firmly "to the hilt". Pinter's symmetrical print-

Collection
Gate, Dublin

ed circuits of dialogue allow power to surge backwards and forwards, flashing viciously off in one direction, only to meet a dead end. Conversation is a perpetual struggle for dominance, a clawing and biting fight for a moment's purchase on the truth.

Characters are accordingly fluid, even fragmented. Craigie is often left silent on stage, offering little more than a

dozing suggestion of female sexuality, while other characters flip-flop from waggish jousting to psychotic knife throwing. McCusker and McCusker have plenty of precision, but do not expend energy in pursuit of specious resolutions to their characters' emotional enigmas. Significantly, it is Pinter's own dependable Harold who comes closest to bundling his contradictory traits and moods into a stable personality.

The production is a spick and span revival: not blazing with desire to uncover a new

vision of Pinter's drama, but gently lit by something that approaches — though never quite slips into — reverence. Frank Hallinan Flood's set of two interlocking naturalistic spaces makes a neat arena for Pinter's existential sit-com. Alan Stanford's chill, drawling direction leaves plenty of gaps for the audience to cough into, but always seems to know where it ought to be going, and at what speed — a rare dash of certainty in this frightening hall of mirrors.

LUKE CLANCY

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AS HEARD ON CLASSIC FM



POP 3

Depeche Mode, the stadium fillers from Basildon, take a yawnsome wrong turning with *Ultra*



POP 4

... and a persistent low-rent feeling mars Cast's latest, *Mother Nature Calls*

THE TIMES POP ARTS



POP 5

... but the maverick Dutch band Bettie Serveert serve up diverting fare on *Dust Bunnies*



POP 6

... and Chemical Brothers have Caitlin Moran swooning over the amazing *Dig Your Own Hole*

Off the drugs and on to junk

POP ALBUMS: David Sinclair on Depeche Mode's cold turkey of a comeback, the misnamed *Ultra*

DEPECHE MODE
Ultra (Mute STUMM 148 £13.99)
NOW virtually unrecognisable as the synth-pop bantamweights from Basildon who started off in 1981 with humalong hits such as *New Life* and *Just Can't Get Enough*, Depeche Mode have turned into a colossal, stadium-rock attraction with a dark and heavy mystique. Their last studio album, *Songs of Faith and Devotion*, released four years ago, topped the charts in both Britain and America, and the arrival of *Ultra* has been flagged by a string of interviews in which singer David Gahan has discussed, with questionable relish, the intimate details of his decline into near-terminal drug addiction and subsequent rehabilitation.

who wrote all the songs, and by producer Tim Simenon of Bomb the Bass, there is a weary feel to this album. It sounds as if, instead of providing inspiration, all the angst they have been through has simply worn them out.

CAST
Mother Nature Calls (Polydor 537 567 £13.99)
CAST have sold a million copies of their 1995 debut album, *All Change*, which, on paper, puts them right up there with the giants of Britpop. But there is a slight but persistently low-rent quality to Cast's retro-pop sound, resulting in songs that are more often functional than inspired.

So it proves with *Mother Nature Calls*, which finds singer and songwriter John Power increasing his range to embrace occasional oddities such as the country-rock ballad, *Live the Dream*, or the mildly weird neo-psychedelia of *The Mad Hatter*, but being content, more often than not, to fall back on the Oasis-like routines of *She Sun Shines* and the current single, *Free Me*. (In truth, Noel Gallagher was probably more influenced by Power's previous group, the La's, than Cast have been by Oasis, but that's the breaks.)

John Leckie's outrageously old-fashioned production, with the harmony vocals pushed right to the front of the mix while the instruments fight for whatever space is left behind, gives an appropriate spin to the album's cheerful, if backward-looking, formula.

BETTIE SERVEERT
Dust Bunnies (Beggars Banquet BBQ 189 £14.99)
STILL paddling around in the indie-rock shallows long after they should be bathing in mainstream success, Dutch group Bettie Serveert continue to make music with rough edges and wry grace.

Even by their standards, *Dust Bunnies* has an unresolved feel, with the arrangements of numbers such as *Sugar the Pill* having been abandoned after the rhythm section arrived at the studio, and others, including the Lennon-influenced *Story in a Nutshell*, succumb to the point of perfunctory. But the day is



The good news is that singer David Gahan (right), has escaped his narcotic hell. The bad news is that Depeche Mode have celebrated with a duff album

carried, as ever, by the sweet and sour voice of Canadian-born singer Carol van Dijk and the lovingly distorted guitar of Peter Visser.

SACRED SPIRIT
Volume 2 Culture Clash (Virgin 8 42962 £13.99)
CULTURE CLASH is the latest project by the publicity-shy Klaus Zundel, the 50-year-old producer, composer and

"conceptualist" from Heidelberg. The follow-up to his two-million-selling *Charts and Dances of the Native American Indians*, it is a fascinating, if unlikely, combination of deep blues and modern classical music set against a discreet latticework of techno and hip hop beats.

The best tracks, especially *Legends* — which features in the current jeans ad starring

two "astronauts" weightlessly grappling in space — and *Roots*, bear a passing resemblance to the sort of fusion that Little Axe invented on their 1994 album *The House That Wolf Built*. But, in general, the melancholy guitar parts and gravelly vocals are blended with stately strings and machine-generated rhythms to create an entirely new musical flavour.

TOP TEN ALBUMS		
1	(1) Spice	Spice Girls (Virgin)
2	(2) Dig Your Own Hole	Chemical Brothers (Virgin)
3	(3) 10	Wet Wet Wet (Precious Organisation)
4	(4) Tragic Kingdom	No Doubt (Interscope)
5	(5) Lisa Stansfield	Lisa Stansfield (Arista)
6	(6) White on Blonde	Texas (Mercury)
7	(7) Blue is the Colour	Beautiful South (Gut Discs)
8	(8) Everything Must Go	Manic Street Preachers (Epic)
9	(9) Glow	Reef (Sony SP)
10	(10) Ocean Drive	Lighthouse Family (Wild Card)

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Rhythm and the blues

BARBARA DENNERLEIN
Junkanoo (Verve 537122-2)
CLEARLY wishing to extend her music beyond the punchy Hammond organ-led small-group sessions that have formed the core of her recorded output, Barbara Dennerlein has attracted a clutch of star names — Randy Brecker, Frank Lacy and David Sanchez among them — to interpret the more adventurous charts she has provided for this, her second Verve album. Despite the presence of her

JAZZ ALBUMS

regular collaborators (guitarist Mitch Watkins and Dennis Chambers, fusion drummer supreme) and the fact that her compositions have lost little of their swirling attractive immediacy, the session has a slightly studio-bound feel to it, as if polish and balance had been considered more important than the chunky, visceral attack frequently associated with the Hammond B3. That said, this is a typically lively Dennerlein set, strongly rhythmic without enslaving itself to the groove. And two guests, tenorman David Murray and vibes player Joe Locke, manage to stamp their considerable individuality on the proceedings.

JOHN COLTRANE
Blue Trane: John Coltrane Plays the Blues (Prestige PRCD 11005-2)
COMPILED from the numerous recording dates undertaken by John Coltrane during his brief association with Prestige (1957-8), this 70-minute selection of blues material is fascinating and frustrating in roughly equal proportions. Although intriguing for the snapshot it provides of the great tenorman (heard on alto on one track here) struggling to accommodate his majestic grandiloquence within the discipline of the 12-bar format just prior to making his breakthrough "sheets of sound" recording *Giant Steps*, it is not quite coherent enough as an album completely to allay suspicions of record-company opportunism. As a relatively easy — and cheap — introduction to cusp-period Coltrane, however, it earns two cheers.

CHRIS PARKER

CDs reviewed in *The Times* can be ordered from the Times Music Shop on 0345-023 498

Fame has not changed the Chemical Brothers; they're just as shy as ever

Two anoraks of fire

If bands were cars and were tested on *Top Gear*, then Celine Dion would be a Ford Escort with a transfer of some palm trees on the boot, and Jeremy Clarkson would dub her "low on poke". The Fugees' Mustang — a classic 1970s car updated — would gain a grudging "OK, for a popular car". And Kula Shaker's rickety retro moped would probably be torched by the firm but fair, Mr Clarkson.

But we rather suspect he would love the Car of Rock that the Chemical Brothers have made. It's a gaudy Volkswagen caravan with a Lear Jet engine, instantly lovable but fearsomely powerful. It hurtles around hair-pin bends with the grace of an oiled panther, but is equally at home parked up in a lay-by, knocking out toast for friends on a tiny camping grill. For those who know that dance music is exciting, but still can't quite find a way into all those 12-inches and white labels, the Chemicals are a welcoming entry point.

Their remixes of Manic Street Preachers, the Charlatans and Primal Scream introduced thousands of indie kids to dance music, and their DJ slots at the Heavenly Sunday Social revolutionised clubbing. The Chemicals would play anything and everything, from hip-hop to house to Happy Mondays. Along with the Prodigy, the Chemicals have taken all the exciting parts of rock music, mixed them in with all the exciting parts of dance music, and made music to get very excited about indeed. It's very exciting.

"Yeah, I suppose it is," Tom Rowlands, the long-haired

Chemical, says. He doesn't look very excited, but then, the Chemicals are painfully shy and embarrassed when they do interviews. They can't talk about themselves without cringing, and trying to make them talk about their music is like trying to feed a toddler parsnips. They turn their heads this way and that, and shoot pained looks at the interviewer. In a moment of enormous braggadocio, Ed Simons (the curly-haired Chemical) offers that their new album, the awesome *Dig Your Own Hole*, is "better than the last one". But then, he adds, "lots of people liked the first one as well."

Meeting at Manchester University in 1991, the Chemicals bonded through a shared love of Monster Trucks, an American sporting pursuit in which enormous trucks drive over slightly smaller enormous trucks. For reasons they still can't explain, the Chemicals found this the most hilarious sight on God's green earth. They made a pact to record their first single after they'd witnessed their thousandth truck being pulped. "I can still remember what the truck was called — Eddie's One-Stop Monster Muncher," Rowlands giggles. "We thought about calling the first single that, as a tribute." Alas, it was the re-named *Song to the Siren* that the influential DJ Andy Weatherall picked up on and played to death.

During the next three years, the Chemicals gently ascended the Arc of Fame, reaching the



CAITLIN MORAN

top of the curve last year, when Noel Gallagher sang on *Serious Sun*. This sawing, buzzing, violent mash-up of *Tomorrow Never Knows* went straight in at No 1, and has now been followed to the top by *Black Rockin' Beats*. And, even better, the Chemicals enjoy the most enviable type of fame — very few people have the faintest clue what they look like.

"I was once recognised by this old lady at Sandwell and Dudley railway station," Simons says. "But she thought I once presented *Blue Peter*."

Dig Your Own Hole is really an A-Z guide of everything cool to ever happen in pop music: heart-straining chord changes, block-rockin' beats, sirens, whistles, people

shouting "Who is this doing this synthetic type of alpha-beta psychedelic funk?", hip-hop, dub, rock and pop.

The Chemicals' *Day in the Life* is the final track — the ominous, dizzy, planet-sized *Private Psychedelic Reel*. A vertiginous whirlwind of stars and endless, relentless beats, it'll suck every word save "Wow" from your vocabulary in one minute flat. That it goes on for another six minutes is a fact for which we should all give profound thanks. One's knees buckle and knot at the thought of how it must sound live.

"Yeah, it's probably the best thing we've done," Rowlands says. Simons looks at him as if he's just stabbed a hen. "Well, a lot of people have said it's OK," Rowlands apologises. "So there you go. The future is OK."

● *Dig Your Own Hole* is released by Virgin Records



The Chemical Brothers model the trainspotting look — the leisure pursuit that is, not the trendy film of the same name

Quality, control

JAZZ CONCERT

Chico Freeman
Ronnie Scott's

either eschewing or denigrating modern developments in the music, quietly championed "the tradition". His front-line partner, trumpeter Jimmy Owens, is similarly inclined. Fronting a dream rhythm section —

pianist George Cables, bassist Cecil McBee and drummer Winard Harper — Freeman began on tenor with his own *Evolution*, but switched to darkly sinuous soprano for Cables' *Love Song*. Freeman and Owens are, above all, mature, considered players with flawless techniques, and while not averse to allowing the odd chorus to harden into an almost funky strut, they restricted themselves, in the main, to providing supremely cultured solos in which the emotion was carefully controlled.

The highlight of Freeman's playing came, characteristically, in a hushed lament, *To Hear a Tear, Drop in the Rain*, composed at the memorial service for a murdered friend. Imbued with quiet dignity and unsentimental but highly affecting grief, it could just as easily have served as a threnody for Ronnie Scott.

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CHANGING TIMES



BOOKS

Mark Twain complete, and defended by top American writers of the present day



PROFILE

Can Philip Dodd give the Institute of Contemporary Arts a reason to exist?

THE TIMES ARTS



DANCE

One man and a world to explore: Daniel Ezralow brings his *Mandala* to the Peacock



MUSIC

Gidon Kremer continues his idiosyncratic celebration of Schubert at the Barbican

BOOKS: Erica Wagner welcomes a definitive facsimile edition of American literature's founding father

Twain complete, and well defended

Fear and alarm are what I remember most about my first encounter with Mark Twain's *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. Thus writes Toni Morrison in her penetrating introduction to the novel, part of a new, complete facsimile edition of Mark Twain's works published yesterday (E240) by Oxford University Press.

"It provoked a feeling I can only describe now as muffled rage, as though appreciation of the work required my complicity in and sanction of something shameful. Yet the satisfactions were great: riveting episodes of flight, of cunning; the convincing commentary on adult behavior, watchful and insouciant; the authority of a child's voice in language cut for its renegade tongue and sharp intelligence."

It is that "renegade tongue and sharp intelligence" that made Mark Twain: that made — after a century of separation from Europe — a voice distinct from the well-modulated tones of the mother country. "All modern American literature," wrote Ernest Hemingway, "comes from one book by Mark Twain called *Huckleberry Finn*."

The Oxford Mark Twain arrives in 29 volumes of staid burgundy and sewn bindings. At first glance it seems to be just the type of thing to sit unread on a dusty shelf. "A classic is something that everybody wants to have read and nobody wants to read," Twain himself said, aware of the air of desecration that can linger about tomes that have made the transition from wonder to worry.

But "classification" has not dulled the wit of Samuel Langhorne Clemens, as these facsimile editions, perhaps paradoxically given their 19th-century look, prove. Clemens himself, a printer and publisher as well as an author,

was keen to see a uniform edition of his work: these would surely please him. But more importantly, as Shelley Fisher Fishkin, noted Twain scholar and the general editor of this collection, remarks: "He would be gratified to see how he had shaped the work and lives of writers of all kinds."

For the chief delight of this collection — aside from the words of Twain himself — is surely the introduction that accompanies each volume. Besides Morrison on *Huck Finn*, here is E. L. Doctorow on *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, Walter Mosley on *The Stolen White Elephant and Other Detective Stories*, Gore Vidal on *Following the Equator* and *Anti-Imperialist Essays* and Erica Jong on Twain's dabbling in cod-17th-century soft porn, *1601*. It may be a commonplace to mark Twain (as it were) as a cornerstone of American literature: in these introductions it is possible to see not only the influence that Twain has had but also the influence he continues to have over working writers. Clemens, says Fishkin, "helped Americans figure out how to use their own culture."

What makes Twain's works so vital is that this "figuring out" still goes on today. This edition, the fruit of five years' work, also provides scholarly "afterwords" to each book, as well as detailed notes. In some cases, as in *A Tramp Abroad*, the delightful line drawings are by Twain himself. It is this that distinguishes the work from collections such as the so-called Definitive Edition of *The Writings of Mark Twain* (1929).

The Oxford Mark Twain takes up 38 inches of shelf space. Such quantity reflects that Twain was not moved to write by spirit alone: money was always a consideration from his earliest days as a journalist. Later in his life, in the late 1880s, he became deeply involved in the fate of a new typesetting machine, devised by one James Paige. Paige was, according to Twain, "the Shakespeare of mechanical invention". He dreamt — as would others who came after him — of publishing without the irritants of human typesetters and their unions. He spent up to \$3,000 a month supporting Paige and his invention: when the inventor turned out to be less Shakespeare and more McConagall, he was well on the way to bankruptcy.

The only way out of his dilemma was to write, and write fast: *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (1889) was produced in the machine's cumbersome shadow, and is as a result a "technically flawed work of art," according to Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., in his introduction. Vonnegut details some flaws, noting his "lame" explanation of how the Yankee got back to the 6th century, the factory foreman's unlikely knowledge of the time and date of a Dark Age solar eclipse, and his astonishingly coincidental arrival just by that time and date: "Oh no, no, no. Please, please, please. One remembers that Twain, in a funny and unforgiving essay, fricasseed

poor James Fenimore Cooper for literary crimes not half that bad."

There is much worse than this to be found in Twain's complete writings, as even the most partisan of Twain scholars will tell you. Novelist Anne Bernays introduces the volume *Merry Tales* and happily admits that only one of them, *A Campaign That Failed*, is worth a non-specialist reading. But, as she says, "It is very interesting to see that even Homer nods. Some pieces I thought, that's a fantastic idea, but I guess he didn't have the energy to work it over properly."

Justin Kaplan, Twain's biographer, remarks that the complete works both give the reader a sense of Twain's range and reveal the writer at work.

But here, too, is all the best of Twain: *Huck Finn*, *Tom Sawyer*, *Pudd'nhead Wilson*, *The Gilded Age*, *Malcolm Bradbury*, who contributes the introduction to *The £1,000,000 Bank-Note and Other New Stories*, notes that while we may have "forgotten some of the shock" that Twain's work first engendered when it appeared, his place as a vibrant, living voice is assured: "If you were looking for an American writer to embody America, as Cervantes is the embodiment of Spain, then it would be Twain."

George Bernard Shaw said much the same thing to Twain himself. And perhaps we have not forgotten the shock, either: in the United States, at any rate, the debate over Twain — most particularly over *Huck Finn* and Twain's use of the word "nigger" — still rages. As Toni Morrison writes: "For a hundred years, the argument that this novel has been identified, reidentified, examined, waged and advanced. What it cannot be is dismissed. It is classic literature, which is to say it heaves, manifests and lasts."

Surely Twain would be happy with that.



Debate still rages over racial issues in *Huck Finn*



The familiar picture of Huckleberry Finn with straw hat and patched trousers was created in 1894 by the 23-year-old Edward Windsor Kemble, who went on to draw all the book's illustrations

The new man in the Mall

PROFILE: Can a new director restore the buzz to the slumbering, 50-year-old ICA? Andy Lavender reports



"You don't have to be solemn to be serious": Philip Dodd plans a fresh start for the ICA

The way of heating that crucible, he suggests, is to give arts practitioners their heads. "I think the Nineties is a very interesting time, when artists are no longer happy to be curated in the traditional way. I want the ICA to be a place where writers, film-makers, visual artists and thinkers can come together, not simply sitting in the bar, but actually helping to shape and develop the programme."

You might expect such senti-

ments. But Dodd turns a number of neat phrases, almost Blairite in their elegance, which suggest that he really does have the measure of the times. ("I'm very interested in 'newness', the term that worries me is 'avant garde'... this is a culture where people will go to the Trocadero and the Tate... you don't have to be solemn to be serious.")

In a few grand gestures he presents himself as someone who is unstuffy and inclusive,

but not afraid of challenge and complexity. What's more, Dodd has to date been as good as his word. Consider that he was recently involved in an event at the Queen Elizabeth Hall where he arranged for a set of pop and rock bands to provide new soundtracks for avant-garde movies. And last year he co-curated *Spellbound*, an engaging and extremely successful exhibition at London's Hayward Gallery. Its participants — Paula Rego,

Terry Gilliam, Damian Hirst (with a film), Peter Greenaway (with an installation) and the young video artist Steve McQueen — indicate the kind of lateral thinking we can expect from Dodd at the ICA. He is also keen to develop an international perspective, housing artworks from other cities like, he suggests, Los Angeles or Prague. And he wants a wider range of people (there's no reason why we shouldn't have scientists here) contributing to what he describes as a "mongrel" mix of ideas. Perhaps the clearest indication of his ambition, however, is his desire to work alongside other venues.

For certain things he admits the ICA isn't big enough — "so I would like to do things outside it. To commemorate 50 years of India, it would be great to do a big Indian film in the park. I would like to do big gigs at the Royal Festival Hall. I would like us to have a big shop window in the centre of London and have one of the artists curate it. What's important is that the ICA's work gets done. What's not important is that it gets done in the Mall."

The new broom is raising some dust. "I want to make an effect very fast," Dodd claims. The word from inside the ICA is that he has breezed in with a panoply of good ideas. Will the institute's old dogmatists learn new tricks? Will London at last have a contemporary arts institute that matters? Watch those spaces and — if Dodd has his way — a few more around London as well.

CONCERTS: A great violinist; plus youngsters to note

Essentially Schubert

Gidon Kremer
Barbican

Gidon Kremer has described Schubert as one of the constant companions in his attempt to quench an insatiable curiosity for art, and he is paying special tribute to the composer in his ongoing Barbican festival, *Schubert — A Contemporary Celebration*. Alongside some of the great chamber works and new pieces inspired by the Schubertian spirit, Kremer is performing all the composer's violin music, and on Monday he reached the four sonatas.

If the violin works are not too-drawer Schubert, Kremer is right to make no apology for them. He treats the music as he would any piece by this most miraculously gifted of composers and brings insights to it that few other violinists can match. The three Op 137 sonatas represent Schubert as a writer of "utility music", and

though they seldom point the way to his vintage melodiousness, they yield secrets to such searching musicianship as Kremer's.

In the D major first sonata, Kremer caught the quiet modesty of the opening, and dug deeper only in the plaintive middle section of the Andante, which like the finale hints at the composer's later style in some very Schubertian twists. He was always on the same musical wavelength as his pianist, Oleg Maisenberg, with magical results in the introverted opening of the A minor sonata and the more vehement G minor work. Both players were relaxed in the more expansive lyricism of the slightly later "Duo" Sonata in

A, a maturer piece which moves from a delicate beginning to fiery intensity.

The concert also featured the premiere of a Barbican commission, Gija Kanchell's *Time... and again* for violin and piano. The composer apparently failed to make any Schubertian allusions, but was reluctant to talk about the piece in a short interview with John Tusa, conducted in Georgian through his wife as interpreter. This latest work has less of the torpor-inducing New Age minimalism for which Kanchell has become known, though it is still largely slow, with ethereal, floated violin lines punctuated by stabbing interjections from the piano. Little motifs come in and out of focus, and there is one searing climax before stillness returns.

JOHN ALLISON

On course for virtuosity

NYO/
Skrowaczewski
Barbican

Two weeks of lectures on Messiaen and Nietzsche, interspersed with dance workshops and ten days of rehearsal: not a typical period of orchestral preparation, but then this was no typical concert. The National Youth Orchestra's Easter course preceded an evening which would have defeated all but the most resilient of virtuosos ensembles.

As if to brace themselves, in their fiftieth birthday year,

against whatever rigours the future might hold (and a good third of them customarily go on to play in professional orchestras), this band of 13 to 19-year-olds fearlessly took on Beethoven's *Grosse Fuge*, Messiaen's *Et exspecto resurrectionem mortuorum* and Strauss's *Also sprach Zarathustra*.

The orchestral course was on the subject of The Philosophy of Life. And Beethoven's *Grosse Fuge* was the most powerful embodiment of that theme in the entire evening. As the NYO, conducted by Stanislaw Skrowaczewski, dug into the sinews of Weingartner's orchestral arrangement, all of human life seemed to be there: the teaming energy of its counterpoint; the individual, still, small voices surfacing diffidently and movingly from the mass; the quiet, slow-breathing episodes in which Beethoven's music seems to reach out to the transcendent.

Messiaen did it all rather more obviously. The five movements of his commemoration of the dead of two world wars illustrate five biblical texts in the voices of brass, woodwind and percussion. And the NYO was more than equal to its task of recreating a steady brass ascent *de profundis*, the wild shriek of the Amazon Uirapuna bird, and the chiming Easter anthems of the morning stars. The work was played, sadly, without the composer's requested one-minute pause between movements which we had been promised in the programme.

Skrowaczewski was an inspiring guide through the universe of Strauss's *Zarathustra*. He made the very most of the vibrant string playing of this orchestra — a sound which speaks of fresh excitement rather than familiarity with its own voice. Linking up, urging on, putting them through their paces in yet another fugue, Skrowaczewski finally yielded to leader Clare Duckworth as she proudly and ably took the floor in the *Dance of Superman*.

HILARY FINCH

Magic of the movies

DANCE
Mandala
Peacock Theatre

never going to be conventional given his previous affiliation with the American movement-illusionist groups Pilobolus and Momix. Although it is a solo show, in effect it seems a lot more, its vista enlarging to take in vast deserts and towering cliffs, forest glades and sweeping mountain-peak horizons.

These are film pictures projected on a complex amalgam of screens. Segments of film are juxtaposed: images

are replicated by mirrors; and amid this kaleidoscope moves the live figure of Ezralow. He is Vesalius's anatomical man: he is a pedestrian in streets filled with shoppers and traffic; he

is a lone silhouette appearing out of the wilderness, his film self transforming into his real self. The stage Ezralow pushes open filmed doors, climbs filmed stairs, and runs along a speeding filmed rail track. The camera angle makes the spectators feel as if they are the train.

Because the trickery and interplay of images creates choreography in itself, it doesn't matter that the dance content is slim. The facile

music — orchestral pop to quasi-religious chorales — is something else, however. Ezralow writes that he wants to achieve a synthesis of means which will stimulate all the senses. Alas, the glazed eyes and trance-like passivity of the audience suggested the opposite. For *Mandala* softly bathes you in a sensory experience that makes no demands, raises no questions, offers everything predigested so nothing is left to the imagination. It is attractive but unchallenging, ambitious but trite.

NADINE MEISNER

EDUCATION

A different discipline

Simon Midgley on
Summerhill, a school
that gives children
the freedom to make
their own choices

An explosive trip from the lips of the exasperated 15-year-old chairing the weekly tribunal dealing with rule-breaking. Lizzie was finding it impossible to conduct the business of the day over the incessant noise from two older boys.

At Summerhill, one of Britain's oldest progressive schools, justice is administered democratically. Children do not mince their words. They also swear freely.

Once peace is restored, litter bugs are fined, a boy who punched a fellow pupil is directed to do half an hour's community work and an allegation that another boy stole a roll of film is found unproven.

As politicians increasingly promote traditional methods of schooling, Summerhill is still doing what it has always done: giving children the freedom to make their own choices. And while British educators laud the regimented, rote-learning approach of the Pacific Rim countries, a steady stream of Japanese, Taiwanese and Korean parents are sending their children to the place the popular press once dubbed "the do-as-you-please, anything-goes, freedom school".

Today, Summerhill — founded by the late A.S. Neill 76 years ago and located eventually in Leiston, Suffolk, in 1927 — has 16 Japanese, nine Taiwanese and four Korean pupils. Only the other week the 67-pupil fee-paying school was visited by the Korean Minister of Education. The school also has 21 children from Britain, 16 from Germany and one from France.

Neill said Summerhill, which prides itself on "Giving Children Back Their Childhoods", might be "the happiest school in the world". He believed that children should have the freedom "to grow at their own pace, freedom from all indoctrination, religious, political, moral: freedom for children to live in their own community, making their own social laws".

In particular, he believed in the innate goodness of the child, that the aim of education is to find happiness, that emotional development is as important as intellectual development, that discipline and punishment dogmatically imposed create fear, that freedom does not mean licence, that respect for the individual must be mutual and that feelings of guilt inhibit independence. In his bestselling book *Summerhill*, Neill said: "The function of the child is to live his own life — not the life that his anxious parents think he should live, nor a life according to the purpose of the educator who thinks he knows what is best." He believed that if a child wants to study, he or she will do so in their own time.

Today Summerhill is run by Zoe Readhead, his daughter, according to Neill's guiding principles. The school lives as a community in a sprawling late 19th-century house in 14 acres of grounds in a small rural town near Aldeburgh. There are seven teachers and three house-parents. The teachers live in the main house or in caravans in the garden.

It is a community of equals. Adults do not impose their wills on the children. A weekly school meeting decides how the



Let's put it to the vote: trainer-wearing pupils at Summerhill School in Suffolk take a democratic decision

school is run. This determines the community's policy, for example, on town visits, bed times and smoking.

A weekly tribunal meeting gives everyone the opportunity to bring up complaints about anti-social behaviour by others. Fines include being last in the lunch queue, half an hour's work in the community or small financial penalties. In both meetings, sanctions and laws are decided by a majority vote. A teacher's vote carries no more weight than a child's.

The second key principle is that lessons are voluntary. There are time-tabled lessons, but a child can choose to attend classes or not. Some spend years choosing not to attend. Despite this, most Summerhill children do take GCSEs and go on to further education college.

There are no uniforms, there is no religious instruction and children can be as untidy as they like in their own bedrooms. Swearing is permitted and the older children are allowed to smoke in private. Mrs Readhead imposes a handful of rules — no alcohol and no pellet guns, and Summerhill abides by the laws of the land on health, safety and drugs.

The popular view that Summerhill is a school without rules. This is wrong. The community has up to 180 rules, which are regularly reviewed and modified by votes in the general meeting.

The chance to argue your case for change and alter or abolish the rules, Mrs

Readhead says, gives children real personal freedom.

"Our philosophy is that you are free to do exactly as you like as long as you do not interfere with somebody else's freedom," she says. "All we do here is respect children enough to allow them to make choices about their own lives. The problem from the outside world's point of view is that people do not believe that children can make sensible choices."

This freedom, she adds, gives children the chance to take responsibility for themselves and for others, and to learn to respect the needs and rights of others. In conventional schools this sense of responsibility is taken away by adults assuming responsibility on children's behalf.

Summerhill has always had a very open and supportive attitude towards sexuality. Neill said that he would gladly give teenagers the opportunity to have a free sex life if he were not governed by British law.

However, Mrs Readhead says: "We can police that so far as we can, but I am not a fool; of course children are going to be having sex. So are they in Leiston High School, so are they everywhere. It would be stupid to imagine that they are not."

She is very critical of mainstream education which encourages children to compete "like racehorses". Neill said he

Leading children to the wonders of Brontë and Kipling

English teachers should be widening horizons — not trapping pupils in a desert of banality

Why are English teachers so frightened of asking their pupils to do any real reading? Much fuss is made about the mechanics of reading, yet almost all pupils learn eventually to decode the squiggles on the page. The really important thing is what you apply the skill to once you've mastered it.

A reading curriculum — and of course I include plays and poetry as well as prose — should be about leading children to areas of knowledge and experience which they would not find on their own.

Why then is a Midlands comprehensive, whose programmes of studying recently came my way, devoting a whole term of Year 7

English lessons to study the film — not Kipling's writing, but the film — of *The Jungle Book*? This movie is top of the video library ratings. This means that most children will have watched it at home. How many of those same children are likely to have read the *Mowgli* stories?

Nowhere in the programme does that school mention Kipling or any reading at all. What an opportunity missed. The three short stories on which the Disney film is based take up fewer than 70 pages in my copy of *The Jungle Book* so why aren't teachers reading them with their pupils, discussing Kipling's style, the way he presents characters and sets his scene?

I am worried about the effects of teachers (and inspectors) damning the wonderful texts which have inspired, delighted and developed readers for generations. Too difficult, they say. Or worse: irrelevant to these inner city/rural/working-class/middle-class/overseas... kids. The pigeonhole of cultural deprivation varies according to school context, but the message and attitude is always the same.

I have several times taught *Great Expectations* at GCSE to pupils of varying abilities in different types of school. This does not seem to me to be

in the least remarkable. Of course, the young people need help, but that is what an English teacher is there for.

This year — in a selective school — my choice of *Great Expectations* has led to amazement from my colleagues. "But it's so long," one teacher said. "The students will find it awfully difficult," observed another. "I'm not brave enough to tackle that," said a third.

Because GCSE was designed as an all-ability exam, it is thought necessary to include in the various syllabuses some very "accessible" novels. In this context "accessible" means written in modern, quite often American, English and short. It also frequently means that

the book must have been written specifically for a teenage readership.

Of course, there is nothing wrong with Mildred E. Taylor's *Roll of Thunder Hear My Cry* or Robert Cormier's *After the First Death*. Indeed, I might use them as class readers with younger groups and would certainly recommend pupils to read them independently. But they are not worth spending many weeks of GCSE class time on when you could, as an alternative, be introducing Dickens or the Brontës.

Doing proper English literature texts at GCSE also enables students to make the step into A-level English Literature work. What chance for a new A-level student embarking on, say, *Barchester Towers*, if the most rigorous book he or she has read is a 100-page American teenage novel?

The Americans have an unlovely, but apt, expression for this miserable, and apparently inexorable, process of educational and cultural deterioration. They call it "dumbing down".

English teachers should be consciously widening literary horizons, not trapping pupils in a desert of banality by restricting their reading to the immediately and superficially attractive. To do otherwise is profoundly anti-educational.



SUSAN ELKIN

THE SUNDAY TIMES



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League tables will outlast May 1

John O'Leary introduces an initial guide to primary school tests in English, mathematics and science

National testing may have been a hot political potato in John Patten's days as Education Secretary, but the only difference between the two main parties now is over who should publish the league tables.

Both Labour and the Conservatives are committed to tables, as well as tests, at seven, 11 and 14. The Tories want national publication; Labour limits its ambitions to local leagues.

As a result, any lingering hopes in the teaching profession that last month's primary league tables were a one-off experiment have been dashed. Seven-year-olds may be given a year's grace, but schools know they will be judged on the tests facing 11-year-olds next month.

Last year for the first time schools took the tests seriously enough to introduce revision sessions, and many encouraged parents to reinforce the work at home. The three books on English, mathematics and science, sponsored by *The Times* in association with the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority, proved instantly popular and eventually sold out.

Twelve months on, the market has expanded, with publishers producing a variety of revision aids, some on CD-Rom. However, the new editions of the three books remain the only ones to include actual test papers, as well as advice and informa-

tion on how this year's tests will differ from previous versions.

The series will be available from mainstream bookshops as well as from Her Majesty's Stationery Office, the publishers. They will cost £5.95 each, and a triple pack will be available for £14.95.

Most of the tests will take place in the week of May 12, although a few high-fliers will sit extension papers in mathematics and science on May 19. Among the innovations will be separate tests of spelling and handwriting, and optional extra tests in grammar and punctuation. There will also be an optional test in mental arithmetic.

Jolted in some cases by the impact of league tables, primary schools can be expected to make even more effort to prepare pupils this year. Nick Tate, the chief executive of the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority, the body responsible for the tests, says that the process has revived the "lost art" of revision.

Many teachers are unconvinced of the value of the tests, but the threat of a boycott, which loomed over last year's operation, appears to have receded. None of the teaching unions voted for action at their Easter conferences. The National Union of Teachers might have done, but the key motion was not debated and the union's executive will not take such a hard line.

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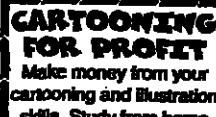
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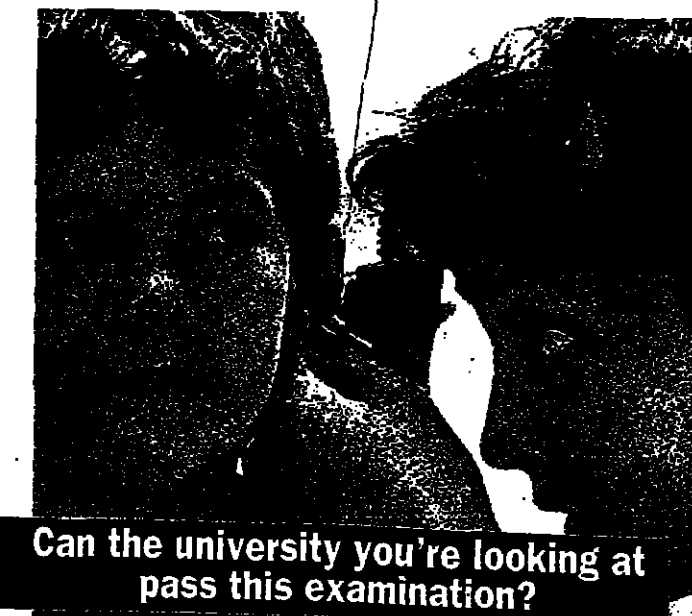
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CHANGING TIMES

Lucy Duncan waves a final farewell to the perils of the Southern Ocean

The pain of being collared at the Cape

Now that we are safely in Cape Town, the memories of the Southern Ocean storms are fading already. The past ten days have been longer than the rest of the leg put together. One of the Southern Ocean's parting gifts to us on *Concert* was a huge wave that knocked three of us over and left us all sporting matching slings.

Standing in the cockpit, preparing to tack the boat with Chris Tibbs at the helm, we postponed the tack to allow a large wave to pass. There was the usual cry of "big wave" from Chris, the skipper, which is the warning to hold on, followed by a slightly more urgent "bloody big wave".

The next thing I knew, I was hit from behind and thrown off my feet by a wave of indescribable force, landing jammed up against the wheel. Chris was lying at the back of the boat, having been thrown off the wheel. He dislocated his shoulder and I broke my collar-bone. John Keating also chipped a bone in his hand.

For the next few days, Chris was unable to steer the boat at all and latterly only when the wind was light. I was banished below decks and spent the most frustrating ten days of my life unable to do anything useful on deck, restricted to repairing the spinnaker and helping out in the galley.

As the racing got closer, the frustration increased. In the

past few days, the lead changed hands between us and *Group 4* several times. Two days before the finish, we were eight miles in front and began to allow ourselves to think we might actually win. The tension was unbelievable. As we came within a few miles of the finish line, *Group 4* was in front and the winds became increasingly variable. The night of the finish seemed to go on for ever as our speed varied from nought to three knots.

The last few miles took several hours and we could see *Group 4* silhouetted in front of us. Although we were gradually hauling our rival in, *Group 4* crossed the line when we were 0.9 miles short — a race of more than 6,000 miles and less than a mile, or 20 minutes, separated the boats.

The only way we knew it had crossed was when we heard a huge cheer echo across the water. The air of disappointment on *Concert* was palpable and we were temporarily struck dumb. It was agonising to lose by such a small margin, but we are a resilient lot and 24 hours later were enjoying the achievement of having crossed our last bit of the Southern Ocean and giving *Group 4* a run for its money.

The crew worked well together, the manner in which we have all got on has been one of the highlights of the leg. We have achieved a lot together and gone through some experiences that I have no intention of repeating. However much you hear stories of the height of the waves and the ferocity of the storms, it's not until you are actually steering



Rival skippers Tibbs, left, and Golding, of *Group 4*, in congratulatory mood at the end of their race to Cape Town

into something the size of a house that you can really imagine how it feels — in my case, slightly terrified, but usually only briefly.

The anxiety for me comes with the thought of the other half of the crew safely asleep below while I am steering my usual, somewhat erratic, course. Having absolute confidence in your fellow crew members certainly helps and a

skipper who inspires limitless confidence means we feel we can take on anything and anyone.

The past five weeks have been memorable and I would not have missed the experience for anything. However, I can safely say I never want to come here again. The Southern Ocean is an inhospitable place not designed for humans. It has an intimidating, bound-

less power and what sometimes seems like a malevolent spirit. It's actually quite easy to become paranoid that it's out to get you.

Our experiences have brought out some unlikely literary talents among the crew. Even one of our "rough, tough" bowmen has turned to poetry. He composed an ode to the Southern Ocean that included the lines:

Your nights are short, your days are long but only the albatross really belong

It definitely felt that we were unwelcome visitors. We are now looking forward to the next leg. Warm-water sailing will seem like heaven. My priority is to get my shoulder healed so that I am not destined for galley duty.

TRIATHLON

London event planned as world's largest

By DAVID POWELL

THE London Triathlon, to be staged for the first time this year, has been given the seal of approval by Britain's top competitors. Simon Lessing, the Olympic-distance world champion, has been signed for the men's elite race and there will be an unprecedented contest between Britain's leading five women.

Britain's first mass participation triathlon, to be held in Docklands on September 21, is seeking 5,000 entries. It will be held along the lines of the London Marathon and will be open to elite, club and novice competitors, with a strong emphasis being placed on raising money for charity.

There has always been a disappointment that there has never been a London Triathlon. Lessing said: "What will unique about it is its criterion style, so spectators can see everything. Most people think of triathlons being for athletes who are abnormal, but it is something most people can do."

Elaine Shaw, the British Triathlon Association chief executive, said of the first race between Britain's leading five women: "This will answer a lot of questions previously unanswered." The San Diego-based Sara Cox and the Alicante-based Annaleah Emmerson will join Rachel Horn, from Cambridge, Sian Brice, from St Albans, and Loretta Sollars, from Nottingham, in a race to show who is British No 1.

Opponents for Lessing will include Dennis Looze, from Holland, the European Cup champion, and, according to Michael Smithwick, the event manager, it is "likely" that Luc van Lierde, the Hawaii champion and European short-distance champion, will also line up.

"This is an indication that the London Triathlon is really making its mark," Shaw added. "People all over the world are looking to see how

it goes. It is creating great interest internationally."

Horn is the United Kingdom champion. Sollars was her predecessor and Brice, though a relative newcomer to triathlon, is thought to have outstanding potential in the sport.

Emmerson has been better-known as a duathlete than a triathlete, but has been working hard on her swimming and is the United Kingdom middle-distance triathlon champion. Cox was doing well in the International Triathlon Union series before she was interrupted by injury last year.

Beginning with a swim in West India Dock, incorpo-



Lessing: enthusiast

rating a cycle circuit out towards the City Airport and ending with a run in and around the area of Canary Wharf, the event, should it achieve the numbers it is seeking, will require a bike transition area the size of Wembley Stadium.

"We are aiming to be the biggest in the world," Smithwick added. "We are not going to be restricted by lack of vision."

The Mrs T's Triathlon in Chicago is the biggest at present, attracting 5,000 participants. Britain's largest to date is the Royal Windsor, which catered for 750 competitors last year.

AMERICAN FOOTBALL: WORLD LEAGUE LOOKS FOR LONDONERS TO PUT LAST SEASON'S TROUBLES BEHIND THEM

Monarchs head west in search of brighter future

By RICHARD WETHERELL

WHILE the World League of American Football (WLAF) kicks off a new season in Amsterdam and Düsseldorf tomorrow, it is the game at Stamford Bridge on Sunday that will receive the greatest scrutiny. Metropolitan bias notwithstanding, the fate and fame of the London Monarchs in the six-team league is seen as the main indicator of the league's health.

On the field, they will be looking to improve on their 4-6 record of the

past two seasons. Off the field, they hope their move away from White Hart Lane, the North London home of Tottenham Hotspur, to Chelsea in West London will pay off in increased attendances. They played at Stamford Bridge for last season's final match when, for a meaningless encounter, they attracted more than 11,000, the third-best of five home games.

Alton Byrd, the Monarchs' new general manager, is used to the problems of trying to make a minor-

ity sport's voice heard. The American has been involved in British basketball for more than a decade and knows his organisation has to improve on last year's troubled campaign, when the head coach was dismissed after two games and the acquisition of William "Refrigerator" Perry proved less than galvanising both on the field and in attracting spectators.

Byrd sees the move as a positive step. "We're not splitting the city, as we had been with Tottenham. It will

make a difference to our fans and to those who have never been before." It is the latter group that needs to swell.

Leading the Monarchs from quarterback is Stan White, allocated by the 'New York Giants' of the National Football League, who will be using this year to try to follow the lead of Brad Johnson, the Monarchs' quarterback in 1995 and now the starting quarterback for the Minnesota Vikings.

The most surprising national player — all the teams have seven non-Americans — is Jason Byworth, a wide

receiver, who was two years old when Margaret Thatcher came to power and has never played an adult game of American football. "I was aiming to make it to this level, but I wasn't expecting things to happen so soon."

There has been no such upheaval in Scotland, who begin their defence of their World League championship with a visit to the new Amsterdam Arena.

PICTURES: Tomorrow: Amsterdam Admirals v Scottish Claymores; Rhein Fire v Barcelona Dragons; Sunday: London Monarchs v Frankfurt Galaxy

SPORTS LETTERS

Cricket needs grading system for umpires

From Mr Barrie Stuart-King

Sir, As a full member of the Association of Cricket Umpires and Scorers (ACU&S) and a Surrey Championship and Club Cricket Conference umpire, I must take issue with Mr J. M. Hepworth's letter ("Umpire must be certain", March 29).

To the trained umpire, law 36 (leg before wicket) is one of the easier upon which to adjudicate. He has three questions of fact to consider before answering the appeal: first, did the ball pitch in line; wicket-to-wicket, or outside the line of the off stump; or was it intercepted full pitch? If outside the line of the off stump, did the striker attempt to play the ball? Second, was the first point of impact the striker's body or equipment, not his bat or hand holding the bat? Third, was this first point of impact in line wicket-to-wicket?

The fourth (not second) question the umpire has to ask himself simultaneously is: would the ball have hit the stumps? This is, of course, subjective, but an experienced umpire does not have a problem with it. Before answering the appeal, he mentally calculates the "travel distance" of the

ball from point of pitching to impact: any movement of the ball in the air or off the pitch; pitch condition; height of batsman; position of striker's feet; and movement/positioning of the wicketkeeper.

Prior to this — and concentration is the key — the umpire will be fully aware of not only the bowler's action, but also from where, in relation to the stumps, he bowls each ball.

As a league umpire, I would be embarrassed to admit that I gave out leg-before only those batsmen who were playing back and were "plumb in front" of their stumps. Such an attitude, such a lack of understanding of the law, is unfair to both the bowler and the fielding side.

Mr Hepworth's suggestion that all leg-before and fine edge catches should be referred to a match referee is not only impractical and time-consuming, but also presupposes that the match referee knows the laws of cricket; and we have a glaring example in a recent Test match — batsman given not out, run out because his foot was on the popping crease — to know that this cannot be relied upon.

The reason why the stand-

ing of umpires is low, particularly in first-class games, is encapsulated above. Very few, if any now, of those appointed to the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB)/International Cricket Council (ICC) first-class list of umpires are formally trained/qualified to the demanding standards required to satisfy full membership status of the ACU&S and it is this fact, coupled with often inadequate performances of those on the list, that is responsible for drawing opprobrium on the profession of cricket umpiring.

Until the ECB/ICC drop their assertion that only (untrained, unqualified) former first-class players make first-class umpires; democratise the selection/appointments process and work with the ACU&S to introduce a formal, national/international grading system for umpires, neither the situation nor standards will improve.

Yours faithfully,
BARRIE STUART-KING,
Linden, Faulkners Road,
Walton-on-Thames, Surrey.

Turning the league tables

From Mr Stewart Reuben

Sir, Am I alone in finding the order in which football teams are listed in the league tables irritating? Where teams have the same score, they are listed in order of goal difference. To my mind, they should be listed in order of number of matches left to play.

Thus (April 7) Arsenal were listed second with 60 points and a goal difference of +27. Liverpool were shown third, also with 60 points, but a goal difference of +26. Arsenal had played 33 matches and Liverpool only 32. Since they were averaging nearly two points per match, clearly the latter team stood better. Similarly, further down, Chelsea were listed incorrectly above Sheffield Wednesday.

The incorrect order persists through the other divisions as well, of course.

Yours faithfully,
STEWART REUBEN,
11 Haversham Close,
Twickenham,
Middlesex.

Colour clash

From Mr Robin Stieber

Sir, It has been a regulation of the Football League for some 60 years that shirts shall be clearly numbered so that spectators can identify the players. The FA Premier League presumably also has a similar requirement. Why then do so many clubs ignore the regulations, using shirts with virtually illegible splotches on their backs?

The worst offenders are those with striped or hooped shirts. The pattern clashes with any number that is applied on top of it, regardless of colour. Look at the mess on the backs of shirts used by Sheffield United, Southampton, Queens Park Rangers, Bristol Rovers, Colchester United, Lincoln City and Hartlepool United — and this is by no means an exhaustive list.

The contrasting square on the back with a number in it provides a simple answer, as admirably shown by Reading

or Plymouth Argyle at present. Even Newcastle United's black square with a white number is too confusing on black and white stripes for clear identification.

I wrote to the Football League last season complaining about Grimsby Town's appalling shirts and they enforced the League's regulation on them, but there is still no coherent policy.

I cannot understand how this problem has been allowed to arise. There are two possibilities: either clubs genuinely believe that their numbers are legible or shirt design is carried out by people who think that the numbers are a nuisance which interferes with their artistic freedom.

Yours faithfully,
ROBIN STIEBER,
89 Langthorne Street, SW6.

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ATHLETICS: MARATHON RUNNER REMEMBERS HOW LOSING HIS JOB IN SHOE FACTORY PUT HIM ON THE ROAD TO GLORY

Humble origins help Evans keep feet on the ground

By DAVID POWELL, ATHLETICS CORRESPONDENT

AS YOU visit Paul Evans at his home in Lowestoft, the second thing he says after telling you not to bother locking your car, because there is never any theft down his quiet little road, is that you are now visiting the most easterly town in England. If he has an excuse for one of the most unenviable records in British athletics, it is where he lives.

No athlete, surely, can match Evans's record of missing a flight to help promote a meeting in which he was to compete then, having returned home embarrassed, missed his flight to the race itself. Evans is self-mocking as he recalls the occasion. It happened to him, Karen, his wife, said: "The trouble around here is that you get stuck behind tractors or caravans." The road from Lowestoft into East Anglia heartland is mainly single carriageway. One tractor and Standed never seems to draw any closer.

Evans has lived in Lowestoft, or nearby, most of his life. He admits to a "farmer's accent", but, in one respect, he is a big city man. In his last three marathons, in New York, London and Chicago, Evans has not been outside the first three. It would be a surprise if he failed to maintain that sequence in the Flora London Marathon on Sunday.

Evans appears relaxed in his immaculate, brightly decorated, new home — not the hyper character he often appears on the running circuit. He sits in his armchair marveling at how running, and the six-figure annual income it brings him, has changed his life. He does not want to forget, does not want to forget, that once he was on the road to nowhere.

Evans, 35, worked for ten years in a shoe factory. "I did not like the job, it was very repetitive and the money was not good," he said. The only saving grace was the camaraderie. He would still be working there, he said, had the factory not closed.

"Getting made redundant was wake-up-and-smell-the-coffee-time," he said. Even if he wins the London Marathon for the first time, it is unlikely to move him like the day he was reduced to tears when the shop floor stopped work to applaud the stand he had made against the management.

One round of redundancies had taken place already and Evans was on a three-day week when he was offered £3,000 to appear in a three-week race through Britain. He asked for time off work, but was refused. He gambled on ignoring the refusal, hoping his job would still be there when he returned. "On the train to Glasgow, every time

He works at Ashley Downs, a school for children with learning difficulties, taking them for cross country. Under his training, they won a competition for special schools. "I felt really good, stupid really," he said.

He is so concerned that acquaintances of old may think success and wealth have affected him that he declined to attend a factory reunion. "They asked me if I would draw the raffle, but I decided not to go," he said. "A lot of people at the factory have not done as well as me, there is a lot of unemployment round here and a lot of them still are not working."

"I am one of the few who have gone on to better things. I worked with them for ten years and I did not want to go there and then ask how I was doing. What could I say? 'Oh yeah, I am doing all right. I went to Bermuda last week, I am being paid to show my face here, put my shorts on there.' That is the last thing I want, so I did not go. I would love to have gone."

Evans feels "uneasy" that one old school friend cleans his windows and that his best friend from childhood is out of work. "He is still my best friend, but it is awkward," Evans said. "My running has brought me nice things, but he is struggling. I have to watch what I say."

A former footballer, Evans sold his boots to a workmate to pay for his first running shoes. "Now Nike send them to me by the box-load," he said. He wears a Tottenham Hotspur tattoo on his right arm, which he regrets now because "sometimes people look at you as if you are going to mug them."

Evans is more Samaritan than mugger and some do-good tasks can be especially poignant. "I actually opened my son's school," he said. "They have got a plaque... Paul Evans... you would think I was the Queen." Appropriate, then, if he was first to the line outside Buckingham Palace on Sunday.



Evans considerate

stopped I nearly got off," Evans said. "I thought: 'Am I doing the right thing?'"

He answered his question with £15,000 in prize-money. At the same time, it was announced that the factory would close. "I went back on the Monday to the shop floor and everybody downed tools and applauded me. It brought tears to my eyes," Evans said. "These guys had just had their world turned upside down, had been made redundant and many of them had worked there from school and were in their fifties and sixties."

Evans is a caring man. He cares what people think of him and does what he can for those less fortunate than himself.



From the left, Catuna, of Romania, Chepchumba, of Kenya, Xujuan, of China, and Machado, of Portugal

Catuna chooses difficult year to make her mark in marathon

David Powell on a Romanian athlete who is keen to conquer new fields

GIVEN the Flora London Marathon's success in the novelty department, it might be tempting for the organisers to ask anybody whose name is a palindrome to run the race facing forward one year and back-to-front the next. Anuta Catuna is not ready for such gimmicks. The novelty of winning on Sunday would be novelty enough.

Catuna, from Romania, is making her London debut, seeking to add the title to those she won at the 1995 World Cup and in New York last year. She has picked a difficult year to make her mark. As Manuela Machado, the European and world champion, from Portugal, indicated yesterday, at a press conference for the overseas challengers to Liz McColgan, who is defending her title, this may prove the most competitive race in the history of commercial women's marathon racing.

"It is much better quality of entry than other marathons I have run," Machado said.



Only in The Times next week: the complete list of London Marathon finishers

"Usually, you get only three or four top runners. Here, you have probably ten."

They include Ren Xujuan, from China, who, despite being given a second opportunity through an interpreter to make sure what we heard the first time was correct, insisted she wanted a pacemaker to halfway in 71 minutes. Given that no woman in the field has

broken 2hr 26min and that Ren had been saying earlier that her preparation had been affected by a cold, this seemed ambitious.

To find such a capable pacemaker at this short notice is almost impossible. "We had better ring Beijing," Alan Storey, the London Marathon general manager, said, tongue-in-cheek. So Ren, if she is intent on 71 minutes, will be out front on her own. Machado, Catuna and Joyce Chepchumba, runner-up to McColgan last year, each said they wanted in the region of 73 minutes.

The prospect of the first victory by a Kenyan woman in London is considerable. Chepchumba being one of four elite runners from her country.

"I have prepared for 2:25, 2:26," Catuna said. Machado went so far as to suggest that,

given a predominantly following wind, Ingrid Kristiansen's world record, set in London in 1985, was not out of reach.

To this observer, Kristiansen's 2hr 21min 6sec is beyond this field, but that does not apply to the men's world record of 2hr 6min 50sec. Antonio Pinto, from Portugal, who has broken 2hr 9min four times, said: "If there is great weather, good pacemaking and the [lead] group helps each other, it is possible."

Pinto admitted frustration at not having moved closer already. "On this course, it is difficult because of the wind, by the marathon world record is probably the easiest world record out there to break." He was not referring simply to road-racing, but athletics in general.

Given the hot weather this week, Storey said that the number of water bottles available to the mass field would be increased from 500,000 to 650,000.

HOCKEY

Slough and Ipswich challenge for title

By ALIX RAMSAY

AFTER seven months of endeavour, the winners and losers in the women's national league will be decided with 70 minutes of hustle and bustle tomorrow afternoon. For the first time since the league was formed, the premier division has been wide open from the very start and, as tomorrow dawns, five clubs are desperate for victory to make the season worthwhile.

Slough, who have won the championship four times and who used to be the favourites from the very first whistle of each new campaign, are in pole position, two points clear of Ipswich, but the destination of the title is anything but sure. They head north to play Hightown, the reigning champions, who, although they have only just crawled out of the relegation zone, cannot be relied upon to roll over.

Should Slough stumble on their way to the finish line, it would clear the way for Ipswich to win their second title, if they beat Trojans. Trojans, who came steaming up from the first division last year, will not make things easy, as they are in dire need of three points to try to avoid making the return journey through relegation. Attempting to help them on their way will be Leicester and Doncaster, who play off at the bottom of the table.

It has been a tough year for Trojans. The league campaign of only 14 matches has been too short for them to adapt to the pace of the premier division and, just when they thought they had identified the problems, it is all over. "The lesson we've had to learn is that, while we like to play open hockey, the other sides are better at organising the team to win the tough matches," Mick Crane, the Trojans manager, said.

Crane is counting on Ipswich being as nervous as Trojans at the start, but he is wary of the strength of the opposition should the game descend into a dour scrap. "If we can relax, we have a chance," he said. "The job we have is settling the players down to let them play to their strengths."

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THE TIMES

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CHANGING TIMES

SHEEHAN on BRIDGE

By ROBERT SHEEHAN, BRIDGE CORRESPONDENT

This Refresher is about finding the best way to develop an extra trick, with some entry management thrown in.

Dealer South Love all Rubber bridge

432	AK96	Q1087
Q865	A103	K94
QJ1082	43	976
8	AQ42	433
	N	
	W	
	E	
	S	
	45	
	72	
	AK5	
	K10765	

Contract: Six Clubs by South. Lead: queen of diamonds

After South opened One Club North was not to be denied, and drove his side to Six Clubs. The cards fit well, and it is a reasonable contract.

How should you set about it? The first move after winning the diamond lead should be a club to the ace, in case East has the four outstanding clubs. When all follow to the first round of clubs, declarer can count eleven tricks: two spades, one heart, two top diamonds and a diamond ruff, and five clubs in hand. So how should declarer try to develop a twelfth, after drawing trumps?

Some players might try a heart, hoping either that West has the king and queen or that he has king or queen doubleton. Another try is to lead a heart from dummy, playing East for Q x or K x.

There is a better play than either of these — declarer should simply lead a low spade towards his jack. This sets up a twelfth trick whenever East has the queen, and if the jack loses to West's queen,

declarer can subsequently lead a low spade and finesse the nine. The only time the spade holding fails to produce an extra trick is when West holds the queen and East the ten, about a 25 per cent chance.

Notice that you should arrange to draw the second and third round of trumps ending in dummy. If you end in hand, East can scramble your entries. You ruff a diamond after three rounds of trumps, and play a spade from dummy. East rises with the queen and plays a heart, removing the entry before you have unblocked the spades.

Britain is the home of three fine bridge magazines: *International*, *Popular Bridge Monthly*, *Bridge Magazine* and *Bridge Plus*. If you think you might like to subscribe to one of them, Mr Bridge will send you a free sample copy of all three. Send £1.50 to cover postage to Mr Bridge, Ryden Grange, Bisleigh, Surrey, GU21 2TH.

Robert Sheehan writes on bridge Monday to Friday in Sport and in the Weekend section on Saturday.

WORD-WATCHING

By Philip Howard

VINET

- a. A trailing ornament
- b. A trailing net
- c. Exactly six

WUP

- a. A fledgling owl
- b. To wrap up
- c. Women's Uplift Programme

VETTURINO

- a. An almond tartlet
- b. A carriage manager
- c. An architectural flourish

XYSTON

- a. A stringed instrument
- b. A short spear
- c. Base of the spine

Answers on page 46

KEENE on CHESS

By RAYMOND KEENE, CHESS CORRESPONDENT

Short revives

After a poor start in the Dos Hermanas tournament in Spain, Britain's Nigel Short revived with a long win against the Spanish grandmaster Valery Salov. After a complicated game of sacrifice and counter-sacrifice, both sides made new queens. Short traded off into a winning king and pawn endgame in which the prospect of a white pawn promoting to a third queen caused Black to resign.

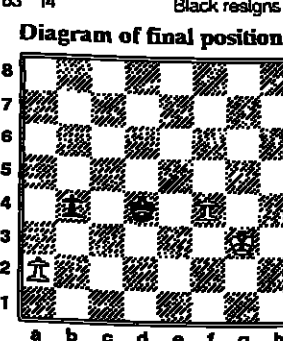
White: Nigel Short Black: Valery Salov

Dos Hermanas, April 1997

Scandinavian Defence

1	e4	d5																																																																																													
2	exd5	Qxd5																																																																																													
4	Be2	Nc6	5	O-O	O-O	6	h3	Bxf3	7	Bxf3	Qc7	8	c3	Ne5	9	d4	Nxd3+	10	Qxd3	Nf6	11	Nd2	Qd5	12	Qe2	e6	13	Nf3	Bd6	14	Ra1	Qc5	15	o4	c8	16	Qe3	Nd7	17	Bd2	Rhg8	18	b4	g5	19	Nag5	Rg7	20	Kf1	Rd8	21	Ne4	Qh4	22	g4	Qd8	23	Qh6	Is	24	Bf4		25	g5	exf5	26	Bxc7	Rg1+	27	Ke2	Rxe1+	28	Rae1	Qe7	29	Kf1	be4	30	Bg3	O7	31	Qd8	Rg3	32	Qg3	Qxc4+	33	Kg2	Nf6	34	Qd6	O7	35	b5	Qg6+
5	O-O	O-O	6	h3	Bxf3	7	Bxf3	Qc7	8	c3	Ne5	9	d4	Nxd3+	10	Qxd3	Nf6	11	Nd2	Qd5	12	Qe2	e6	13	Nf3	Bd6	14	Ra1	Qc5	15	o4	c8	16	Qe3	Nd7	17	Bd2	Rhg8	18	b4	g5	19	Nag5	Rg7	20	Kf1	Rd8	21	Ne4	Qh4	22	g4	Qd8	23	Qh6	Is	24	Bf4		25	g5	exf5	26	Bxc7	Rg1+	27	Ke2	Rxe1+	28	Rae1	Qe7	29	Kf1	be4	30	Bg3	O7	31	Qd8	Rg3	32	Qg3	Qxc4+	33	Kg2	Nf6	34	Qd6	O7	35	b5	Qg6+			
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36	Kf1	Qf5
37	g1	Qg5+
38	Kf2	Qf5
39	Re2	Qxb5
40	Qe6+	Kc7
41	Qe5+	Kd7
42	Re3	Qe5+
43	de5	Nd5
44	Rxe4	b5
45	Rf4	c5
46	Rxf7+	Ka6
47	Ra7	c4
48	h4	c3
49	Ra6+	Kxh5
50	h5	b4
51	h6	c2
52	h7	c1Q
53	h8Q+	Kd4
54	Qe6+	Kd5
55	Oh7+	Kd4
56	Qg7+	Kd3
57	Qg3+	Kd4
58	Qe6+	Kc5
59	Rd6	Qd2
60	Rd5+	Qxd5
61	Qxd5+	Kxd5
62	Kg5	Kd4
63	h4	Black resigns



Times book

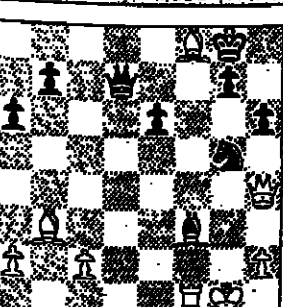
The Times Winning Moves 2 contains 240 chess puzzles from international grandmaster Raymond Keene's daily column in *The Times*, and is available now from bookshops or from B.T. Batsford Ltd (tel: 01376 331276 at £6.99 plus postage and packing).

Raymond Keene writes on chess Monday to Friday in Sport and in the Weekend section on Saturday.

WINNING MOVE

By Raymond Keene

Black to play. This position is from the game Herbretschmeier — Dietze, Eppstein 1984. Black is a rook in arrears, but the white king is dangerously exposed. This proved to be the more relevant factor. Can you see why?



Solution on page 46

55 من الابرار

Hill's replacement at Williams is finding it hard to keep up with life in fast lane

Frentzen rides on vicious learning curve

MICHAEL CALVIN



On the trials of following in a champion's footsteps

DAMON HILL, an innately decent man, is intrigued by human frailty. He regards cynicism as an occupational hazard and has learned to detect the slur behind the smile, the contempt cushioned by a handshake. Sitting under a fierce autumnal sun at the Autodromo Oscar A Galvez in the southern suburbs of Buenos Aires yesterday afternoon, he gave thanks for such instincts.

Formula One encapsulates everything we like and loathe about ourselves. Hill said, with a knowing smile. The man who took his job, cloistered in an airless temporary office behind the Williams garage, concurred.

Heinz-Harald Frentzen is beginning to understand the perils of false flattery, the tyranny of instant judgment. He has, after two races with the team that made Hill world champion, been dismissed as a weak-willed failure. As absurd as it may appear to those untouched by the institutionalised sensationalism of Formula One, the Argentine Grand Prix this weekend has been billed as his last chance.

Everyone, in this incestuous world, loves a victim. Since Frentzen's soft voice and natural shyness emphasise the impression of sudden vulnerability, he is a natural target.

Popular fiction along the pitlane suggests that Frentzen was forced to abandon a planned holiday to report to the Williams factory a week ago, where he was supposedly reminded of his shortcomings by Frank Williams, the team owner, and Patrick Head, Williams's technical director.

The truth is rather more prosaic. Frentzen freely chose to report to Grove, in the Oxfordshire countryside, to study telemetric data from the Brazilian Grand Prix.

No one hid from the deficiencies of his race, which were amplified by the victory by Jacques Villeneuve, his team-mate. His discussions with his employers, joined by Tim Preston, his race engineer, were pointed, but professional.

"Nobody likes bad rumours, especially if they are not true," Frentzen said, self-consciously countering jet lag by swigging from a plastic bottle of mineral water.

"I am not prepared to lie to defend

myself," he added. "I came to Williams as the new boy. I am open to ideas and want to develop my experiences. My philosophy is to learn as much as possible, as quickly as possible."

"Everyone is too quick to form an opinion. They tell me I can't hold the pressure, that I am a weak egg. There are so many stories flying around, but the people who are telling them don't know me."

"What can I say? If I say I am going to win a race or a champion-

'If I say I am going to win a race or a championship people say I am arrogant'

ship, people will say I am arrogant. If I explain what happens when things go wrong, they say I am making excuses. I can't win."

There was no real anger in his words. Instead, he seemed sad to the point of naivete. He did not want to believe that rival drivers, led by David Coulthard and Johnny Herbert, had offered unflattering opinions about his strength of character.

Drivers, however, are mere commodities in a sport that prides itself as a sophisticated market economy. Their selfishness is instinctive, their horizons are limited. It is business, nothing personal.

As if to emphasise the sums

invested in Frentzen's unproven potential, Rothmans yesterday announced a one-year extension of its sponsorship of the Williams team. The fee, though a closely guarded trade secret, is unlikely to be less than \$30 million.

Frentzen was revealingly blind to the irony of his subsequent admission that he is struggling to come to terms with Hill's hidden legacy, a car set up to be more predictable, less skittish.

"There is still the feeling that there is something in the car which is a secret to me," he said. "It was a question that was bothering me as I was driving during the first two races."

"I work methodically, step by step, but I can't use the car as I want. It is as if the things I want to find out have disappeared into some sort of Bermuda triangle."

Head, suspicious by inclination of the cult of personality within Formula One, offers measured, yet double-edged, praise. "Heinz-Harald is very talented, but I think he relies on that a bit too much," he said.

Many are ready to rush to conclusions and read into such comments inferences of a lack of a racer's mentality. Other more measured judges, such as Michael Schumacher, have a more revealing sense of perspective. Schumacher feels his fellow German is suffering from nothing more debilitating than a run of poor luck. He understands, better than anyone, that a Formula One car is a complex jigsaw of 10,000 constituent parts.

"It is not easy to join a new team, with a new car," Schumacher said. "Everyone needs time to find their feet. I did, with Ferrari. Ayrton Senna did, when he first sat in a Williams."

Frentzen brightened at the support from an unexpected source. "Things will come right," he said. "I know it is a big job, a big challenge, but I will adapt. I know that Frank Williams is also under pressure. He would wish me to be quicker sooner, but he knows that we win together and we lose together."

But even when teams win together, job security is an alien notion. Just ask Damon Hill.



Frentzen knows that his performances on the track must improve if he is to stay with Williams

Villeneuve holds the formula to light up new team

By MARK FOGARTY



Villeneuve: top choice

JACQUES VILLENEUVE, the favourite to win the Formula One drivers' world championship, has emerged as the leading candidate to head a new team that may be launched in Britain. British American Tobacco (BAT) is behind the move to establish a team that could make its debut next year, with Villeneuve possibly joining in 1999.

BAT has earmarked as much as £250 million over five years to fund an operation that they hope would be capable of beating established teams such as Williams and McLaren. BAT is preparing to enter Formula One not just as a sponsor, but as an owner — or at least leading equity partner — of the new team.

The preferred plan of the company is to have Villeneuve

driving a car — already dubbed the "BATmobile" — built by Reynard, the British company responsible for the winner of the North American IndyCar title for the past two years, and designed by Adrian Newey, the Williams engineer, who is trying to negotiate an early release from his contract.

BAT wanted Villeneuve and his possible world champion's No 1 plate for the team's proposed launch next year, but The Times has learned that Villeneuve has resigned with Williams for another year and will not be available until 1999. BAT is looking at other leading drivers — including Damon Hill — as an interim measure if it decides to start the team next year.

"BAT will own the team," a source close to the company said. "They definitely want equity — 50-50 at least. It's

going to turn the Formula One world on its ear. It will involve a lot of big names and a lot of surprises. They have everything lined up. They're only going to do it to win, not just compete, right from the start."

Another source said that the BAT board of directors had approved the project, authorising a budget of £150-250 million for an initial five-year commitment. "It's as big a deal as anything else in F1," the source said.

BAT spends an estimated \$250 million (about £155 million) a year on sports sponsorships, including support of the British-run 555 Subaru world rally championship and the Lucky Strike Suzuki 500cc motorcycle racing team.

A senior BAT executive confirmed that the group was planning to become a significant presence in Formula One.

"BAT has made it common knowledge [within the Formula One fraternity] that it would like to get involved in Formula One," the executive said.

He admitted that Reynard was one of the candidates to provide the technical foundation and operating infrastructure of the team. "We have had discussions with four potential partners, who will make presentations to us during the next four to six weeks. If we find that one of the options has what it takes to do the job, then it is our intention to make a pretty significant entry into Formula One."

"We realise that we have to make a decision before June if it's going to happen next year. We're definitely at a very serious stage."

BAT wants to build its Formula One team around Villeneuve, winner of the Brazilian Grand Prix, and the

financial incentives offered to persuade him to leave Williams at the end of the year included a small share in the team, but Frank Williams, the team owner, has headed off the move by re-signing the French-Canadian for a third season.

"Jacques will be staying here in 1998," Williams said, before confirming that he was aware of BAT's bid to "poach" Villeneuve. "Jacques will be a free agent after 1998," he said. "But he will always drive where he believes he has the best chance of winning the world championship."

Although the establishment of a new team in partnership with Reynard remains BAT's preferred option, there is still the possibility that the company could buy an existing operation. However, the former outlook is consistent with the qualified denials of Adrian

Reynard, the founder and president of Reynard Racing Cars, who said that he could not have a Formula One team in operation by next year.

"We're not going into Formula One that soon," Reynard said yesterday. "I'm not ready to do it." But while he denied his company was working on a Formula One project, he did not dismiss the possibility of becoming involved in the proposed BAT team. "I'm not denying that we might be being considered. I'm saying that we have no immediate Formula One plans."

"It's fair to say that we want to do Formula One at some stage in a way that's appropriate. Jacques Villeneuve is being touted and he would do an excellent job. He would be perfect. If Villeneuve and BAT were prepared to wait for us, it wouldn't be out of the question."

RUGBY UNION

Financial assistance sought by Llanelli

By DAVID HANDS
RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

FOUR leading clubs in England and Wales are taking contrasting steps to ensure financial stability for further development in the professional era, but whereas Sale and Gloucester seem likely to secure strong commercial backing, Cardiff and Llanelli are looking for the support of their members through share-option schemes.

Of that quartet, Llanelli's plight is the most precarious. At a time when they are playing rugby as attractive as any in Wales and, on Sunday, seek a place in the Swalec Cup final — at the expense of Cardiff. Members have been appraised by Stuart Gallacher, the chairman, who seeks guidance on the money that can be raised from within: "The future of the club hangs in the balance," Gallacher has told members.

Llanelli will be £700,000 in debt on the present financial year, but hope to raise more than that sum on a share offer, on the basis that no significant investor has yet appeared; they could raise cash through the sale of their Stradey Park ground, leasing it back for a 25-year period, but that is their least favoured option.

Cardiff hope to raise a minimum of £1 million by floating shares and Peter Thomas, their chairman, whose financial backing has kept the club to the fore, has stepped down from his wider administrative commitments in rugby to concentrate on the club's future.

Meanwhile, Sale's members met last night to hear of the investment package that would secure the professional element of the club and Gloucester hold a special meeting tonight for the same purpose.

Douglas Morgan, the former national coach, has been named as the Scotland manager for the summer tour of South Africa. The party will be named on Wednesday.

GOLF

Radley add to City's poor record

By A CORRESPONDENT

THERE were few surprises yesterday in the first day's play of the Halford Hewitt Foursomes, the annual public school old boys' competition, which is now in its 66th year.

Held jointly at Royal Cinque Ports and Royal St George's, it was a good day for a number of the tournament favourites as the 64 teams, each with five players, enjoyed the superb conditions.

Radley, who won the trophy for the first time last year, had a comfortable 4-1 win over City of London, who hold the unenviable record of being the fourth-worst team in the history of the event.

Elsewhere, Harrow, who last held the title two years ago and who have won the highest proportion of matches in the competition, recorded a white-wash over Bishop's Stortford, with all five Harrow players winning their matches.

The day's closest encounter was the match between between Bradford and Trent, which finished 3-2 in Bradford's favour. Also through to today's second round are Edinburgh, who demolished Framlingham 5-0. Berkhamsted, who beat Aldenham 4-1, and Merckiston, who overcame Wellington 3½-1½.

CRICKET: SCOTLAND AND IRELAND FRUSTRATED IN WORLD CUP BID

Rain returns to interrupt play-off

FROM A CORRESPONDENT
IN KUALA LUMPUR

THE ICC Trophy third-place play-off between Ireland and Scotland, the winners of which will earn a place in the 1999 World Cup finals, was interrupted by yet more rain here yesterday.

Play started promptly at the Kilat club for the first time in the final series of matches, but it lasted only long enough for Scotland to nudge their way to 56 for one off 19 overs.

The volume of rain that fell was not great, but its effect on an outfield that must be sodden below the surface was to create several

small lakes that were ankle deep in places. Darryl Hair and Srinivas Venkataraghavan, the umpires, sensibly called play off at lunchtime and then floated the idea of playing a fresh 20-over game today if there is no prospect of finishing the original match.

The proposal was quickly backed by the Scots, who will finish fourth and miss out on the World Cup should the game not be completed, but organisers last night ruled out any late change to the tournament playing conditions.

The rain may yet work to Scotland's advantage. With only Iain Philip dismissed, top edging a leg-

side flick to cover, they are well placed to set a challenging target. A minimum of 20 overs per side must be bowled in order for the match to produce a result.

SCOTLAND
11 Philip c Dool, b McCrum 11
12 R Laker not out 19
13 M J Smith not out 13
Extras (R 4, W 5) 9
Total (1 wk, 19 overs) 56
*G Samson, J G Villanovan, M J D Allingham, I A G Davies, I R Bowen, S R Kennedy, K Thomson and K L F Shepherd to bat
FALL OF WICKET 1-19
BOWLING Gillespie 5-1-10-0, McCrum 7-1-14-1, Hoggie 3-0-14-2, M W Patterson 2-0-11-0, Harrison 2-0-3-0
IRELAND: D J Cunn, A D Patterson, D A Lewis, J D R Berran, N G Dool, A R Durkin, D Hoggie, P G Gillespie, G D Harrison, M W Patterson, P McCrum
Umpires: D G Hair (Australia) and S Venkataraghavan (India)

BOWLS: HANDY CROSS REACH FINAL OF INDOOR PAIRS CHAMPIONSHIP

Favourites slip to surprise defeat

By DAVID RYNS JONES

ALAN SPRINGELL and Gary Grace, of the Handy Cross Club, High Wycombe, pulled off a surprise 19-18 win over Simon Stevens and Ian Bond, of Exeter's historic Exonia Club, in the semi-finals of the national indoor pairs championships at Melton Mowbray yesterday.

Bond, who became England's youngest singles champion two years ago when he was 20, and Stevens, who is 29, had established themselves as favourites to win the title after sweeping through the first three rounds, scoring 73 shots and

conceding only 29. That Bond, of slender build, is made of sterner stuff than first appearance would suggest was proved when he beat Ian Schuback, of Australia, on the way to the quarter-finals of the world indoor singles championship at Preston in 1995.

The Devonians took an early lead over the Buckinghamshire pair, but were pegged back in mid-game and had lost the lead by the seventh end.

Handy Cross, 18-17 ahead after 19 ends, scored a vital single when Bond missed narrowly with a series of firing shots, then clinched their place in the final when they

dropped a single on the 21st end. Springell and Grace had scraped through their first-round encounter with Falcon, but showed their paces with a 31-13 second-round victory over British Cellophane, then quelled a strong challenge from Ken Bousfield, of Darlington, and his nephew, Tony Bousfield, in the quarter-finals.

Steve Airey and Noel Burrows, the Blackpool Borough crown green bowlers, reached the semi-finals with a 22-17 win over the 1992 champions, Ted and Iain Boyle, from York.

Results, page 45

Home improvements without the second mortgage.



FOOTBALL: ABSENCE OF KEY MIDFIELD PLAYER GIVES HIGH GROUND TO GERMANS IN EUROPEAN CUP SEMI-FINAL

Keane sense of loss adds to United's suffering



Ferguson: critical

By OLIVER HOLT
FOOTBALL CORRESPONDENT

MANCHESTER United stayed on in Germany yesterday and took to the playing fields of Prussia to try to find a pre-emptive cure for the European hangover that always seems to affect them on their return from playing abroad. Their FA Carling Premiership match against Blackburn Rovers at Ewood Park tomorrow may already have been occupying their thoughts, but everyone else still had Borussia Dortmund on their minds.

As he struggled through Düsseldorf airport, posing obediently for the crowds of British teenagers who wanted their picture taken with him, signing autographs at every turn, Terry Venables, the former England coach, was upbeat. If United could get an early goal in the second leg at Old Trafford on April 23, he said, the match could develop into a rout, "another Porto".

In a quieter corner of the departure lounge, Glenn Hoddle, Venables' successor, was more circumspect about the English champions' chances of overcoming the one-goal advantage the Germans had earned in the first half of their semi-final, courtesy of a late deflected shot by René Treschok.

Nicky Butt and Gary Neville had shared the distinction of being the best players on the pitch with Andreas Möller, he said, but he feared that the Germans' ability to score a goal on the counter-attack could kill off the return fixture and ruin United's dream of playing in the European Cup final in Munich on May 28, almost certainly against Juventus.

In other circumstances, perhaps, Dortmund's slender advantage, coupled with the dominance that United enjoyed throughout the second half at the Westfalenstadion on Wednesday night, would be grounds for hope verging on expectation that

Treschok's goal could be wiped out in Manchester and that Dortmund could be overhauled. United have done that and more before, as a Barcelona team containing Diego Maradona once found out.

But these circumstances are different. The United team that competed so stoutly here will be significantly weakened in the return leg by the absence of Roy Keane after the Irishman was booked for the second time in the competition. "He never touched the player," Alex Ferguson, the United manager, said. "They both missed the ball."

Perhaps even more important, the German champions will be immeasurably strengthened by the return of Matthias Sammer, the European footballer of the year, in their defence.

Sammer, missing on Wednesday because of suspension, is likely to stretch a central midfield that will probably be composed of Butt and Ronnie Johnsen by stepping out of

defence to bolster his team's own midfield.

The Dortmund players, in fact, will be swarming back in droves. Six first-team regulars were injured on Wednesday night, but men such as Stéphane Chapuisat, Karlheinz Riedle, Jürgen Kohler and possibly even Steffen Freund are likely to bring Borussia back to almost full strength.

United, of course, could still do it. The atmosphere so hostile for United and intoxicating for Dortmund in the Westfalenstadion will inspire United at Old Trafford, although the Germans are unlikely to be swept away in the tumult as FC Porto were in the quarter-finals. In United's favour, though, Peter Schmeichel, their Danish goalkeeper, who was forced to pull out of the match on Wednesday at the last minute with a back injury, and David May, a late victim of a thigh strain, should be fit to bolster the Premiership leaders' defence.

Although he would only admit

publicly to "confidence" on Wednesday night, privately the Dortmund coach, Ottmar Hitzfeld, is thought to consider that his team have done the hard part now, survived the chances that United made, rode the luck that every team needs and that they will be hard to overcome on foreign soil, just as they have been throughout the competition so far.

After Venables and Hoddle had had their say, a third from the ranks of the great and the good put forward a more bullish view on the prospects of the two teams. Franz Beckenbauer, his hair grey now as a kaiser's should be, has played his part in battles with the English and he was in no doubt about who held the high ground.

"It was important for Borussia Dortmund that they did not concede a goal," Beckenbauer said. "Manchester United have a very bad defence and because of that I think Dortmund can also score at Old Trafford and go through to the final."

EQUESTRIANISM

Skelton has last chance to qualify for World Cup final

FROM JENNY MACARTHUR
IN 'S-HERTOGENBOSCH

NICK SKELTON, the winner of the Volvo Showjumping World Cup in 1995 and placed third last year, has his last chance to qualify for this year's final when he competes at the 's-Hertogenbosch Show in Holland this weekend.

The World Cup preliminary round on Sunday is the last of the 15 qualifiers before the final in Gothenburg, Sweden. Only those in the top 18 of the Western European League qualify. Skelton, who lost the ride on his 1995 winner, Dollar Girl, in December, is in joint-26th place and needs to finish in the top three on Sunday to earn his ticket.

He is taking no chances. Having failed to reach the jump-off in both the Paris and Dortmund qualifiers last month — where he rode Zanza and Tinka's Boy, respectively — he will revert to his Olympic horse, Showtime, this weekend.

John and Michael Whitaker, who also compete, have no such pressure on them. Since their disappointing performances in the Olympic Games in Atlanta, they have scarcely put a foot wrong and are first and second in the league. John, who has missed only one final since the World Cup started in 1979, won the qualifiers in Berlin and Paris, on Welham — the horse he rides on Sunday — and Bologna, on Grannusch.

Michael, whose best placing in the final was third in 1994, was runner-up in Bologna, on Ashley, the horse he rides this weekend, and third in Dortmund and London. The main concern for these two is to keep their horses sweet for the final next month.

Of the other two Britons competing, Geoff Billington, who was sixth in the 1995 World Cup, is in joint-eleventh place in the league and Robert Smith lies more precariously in nineteenth place. Billington is likely to improve his place on Sunday when he rides his Olympic horse, It's Otto, on which he finished sixth — the highest-placed Briton — in Atlanta. The Dutch gelding has proved himself equally adept indoors, finishing third in Paris and Bologna this spring and runner-up in Berlin last November.

Robert Smith, who needs a good performance to secure his place, will ride Tees Hanauer, on which he won the London qualification in December. He is optimistic about his chances: "The horse is experienced and knows it all. He's also had a three-week rest since his last show in Zurich and he's better after a break."

"The Britons' main opposition is likely to come from the Germans, who are sending all four members of their Olympic gold medal-winning team — Ulrich Kirchhoff, who also won the individual gold medal, Ludger Beerbaum, winner of the 1993 World Cup, Franke Sloothaak, the world champion, and Lars Nieberg."

The three-day show also hosts the final of the Volvo World Cup dressage, in which Anky van Grunsven, of Holland, on Bonfire, the winner of the team and individual silver medals in Atlanta, is attempting a third successive win. Britain has only one qualifier, Richard Davison, who competes on his Olympic horse, Hiscow Askari.

Chesterfield in awe as final frontier approaches

Richard Hobson on the team out to defy history and logic by reaching Wembley

To reach the FA Cup final is a small step for Middlesbrough, but a giant leap for Chesterfield. Six times before, teams from the old third division have featured in the semi-finals of the Cup. All six failed and logic dictates that Chesterfield will suffer the same fate at Old Trafford on Sunday.

The problem is that, by accepting such an assessment, Chesterfield will effectively concede defeat. Somehow, a squad assembled at a cost of £415,000 has to consider itself the equal of opponents costing £22.5 million. Tom Curtis, a free transfer from Derby County, who played part-time

Derby County in the quarter-finals to set up a tie against Watford. Hore exuded calm during the build-up.

"I did an interview with John Motson at lunchtime on the Saturday and he was flabbergasted at how relaxed I was," Hore said. "I think that might have got to Watford because when I exchanged team-sheets with Graham Taylor [the Watford manager] before kick-off, his hand was shaking like a leaf. I went back to the dressing-room to tell the lads and I think it finally convinced them they could win. We went wrong by conceding an early goal."

The difficulty is in striking the balance between being relaxed yet still committed. Victory against Bury in the third division play-off final at Wembley two years ago suggests that Chesterfield can cope with the big occasion, but on that afternoon the attendance was just 22,000. They attracted little more than 4,000 for their Nationwide League second division game against Watford on Tuesday night. On Sunday, Old Trafford will be full to its 55,000 capacity.

John Duncanson, the manager, took his players to the Manchester United ground on Thursday last week in an attempt to acclimatise. According to Duncanson, the captain, they looked into the huge stands in awe — and that was when they were empty. For the first time this season, the club will stay in a hotel overnight.

It is often said that the underdogs have nothing to lose. There is something peculiarly English about a sentiment that implicitly accepts glorious defeat. In this case, the reality is that the Chesterfield players are unlikely to have a better opportunity of appearing in an FA Cup Final. Those townsfolk who bought most of the 21,000 tickets the day that they were put on sale and the shop-owners who have bedecked their frontages with blue-and-white garlands

and balloons — this, ironically, in a Labour stronghold — can take pride in coming this far. Among the players, defeat must be regarded as a shattering blow.

"I genuinely do not know if the players are pleased to have got this far," Duncanson, a Scottish League Cup-winner as a player with Dundee in 1974, said. "I have brought them up to want to win more than anything else in the world. My own attitude is that whatever round of the Cup you are in, you have to be disappointed if you do not reach the next one, but they will walk out to something they have never experienced before and I do not know how they will cope."

"You cannot buy chemistry between people, but you can buy a player with good discipline, good heart, courage and the determination to overcome problems. You should not dissect teams individual by individual because you want 11 players whose strengths complement each other. My job this weekend is to pick my 11 and then see if we are good enough."



Duncan makes the case for Chesterfield to the media before the FA Cup semi-final with Middlesbrough. Photograph: Laurence Griffiths / Allsport

FALLERS AT THE LAST — THE SIX THIRD DIVISION FA CUP SEMI-FINALISTS

1957 MIDDLESBROUGH

Scored 22 goals on the way to the semi-final and beat Manchester City, who became league champions, to reach the last four. By then, their player-manager, David Mangnall, had earned the nickname "David the Giant Killer". The third division south side went ahead in the semi-final against Sunderland at Huddersfield's old Leeds Road ground, but eventually lost 2-1 to a late goal from the tiny Scottish striker, Hughie Gallacher.

1954 PORT VALE

To this day, supporters lament the penalty decision that denied Vale a semi-final replay against West Bromwich Albion. Tom Chesdale brought down George Lee, but most of the crowd at Villa Park, which

1955 YORK CITY

Refreshed by an overnight stay in Mallock and encouraged by the ten shilling win bonus on offer, York took a Newcastle United side, including Jackie Milburn, to a replay before losing 2-0 at Hillsborough. The first game was played on a waterlogged pitch, which proved to be a great leveller, but class told during the second game. York had reached the last four without a manager having failed to replace Jimmy McCormick, who had resigned the previous September.

1959 NORWICH CITY

Another side to take their first division opponents to a replay, Norwich lost 1-0 to Luton Town in the second game at St Andrews with the future Northern Ireland manager, Billy Bremner, scoring the decisive goal. Their run received massive publicity from the third-round win against Matt Busby's Manchester United onwards. In the quarter-final against Sheffield United, Ken Nethershot played for 60 minutes with a dislocated shoulder. Their league form dipped, however.

1976 CRYSTAL PALACE

With his big cigar and fedora hat, Malcolm Allison cut a distinctive figure as he led Palace into the last four, but they were hugely disappointing in losing 2-0 to Southampton, from the

second division, at Stamford Bridge

to goals from Peach and Glichrist. Tommy Docherty had described the game as "a bit of a joke", but was made to look sheepish when his own Manchester United side lost to Southampton in the final, the final surprise in a season full of shocks.

1984 PLYMOUTH ARGYLE

Against a Watford side renowned for its direct approach, Plymouth pushed forward relentlessly without being able to equalise George Reilly's goal. More than 20,000 supporters made the journey to Villa Park from the South West, around four times the average attendance. John Hore, the manager, made a rod for his own back by raising so many ambitions. After a poor start to the following season, he was sacked, using his compensation money to invest in a health club in Exeter.

in the world in a pressure situation," Duncanson said. "Every player at the lower levels wants to better himself and this is a great opportunity."

The experience of Peter Taylor provides a perfect illustration. A winger with Crystal Palace in 1975-76, when they lost to Southampton in the semi-finals, he became the first England international from the third division for 15 years and eventually joined Tottenham Hotspur.

Chesterfield have put so much into their run. Realistically, it will cost them the chance of competing in the play-offs. Middlesbrough, though, remain in difficulties in the FA Carling Premiership and face Leicester City in the Coca-Cola Cup final replay next Wednesday. With so many distractions, Hore senses that the favourites might struggle.

"Chesterfield have a better chance than people imagine and that will work in their favour," Hore said. "Sides from the old third division have pulled off shocks before. One day, it will happen in a semi-final. I know, because Plymouth almost did it."

Feuding Chelsea pair grow further apart

By BRIAN GLANVILLE

RUUD GULLIT and Gianluca Vialli have probably reached the point of no return, after Chelsea's 3-0 home defeat against Arsenal last Saturday. "This town," they might say, as is said in the Westons, "ain't big enough for both of us." Gullit has been tactless, Vialli feels humiliated. As Italian stars do, he has given soft answers in England, but spoken grievous words on Italian television. But to call Gullit jealous of Vialli surely borders on absurdity.

In this respect, Fabio Capello, the former manager of AC Milan, now manager of Real Madrid, has been called in support. He had accused Gullit of "arrogance" when once he brought himself on in attack, rather than take Vialli off the bench, "when everyone knows Gullit's finished as a player. He didn't get anywhere near the ball."

The fact is that Gullit is far from finished as a player. He remains, potentially, a majestic figure, though he himself

has said repeatedly he would be quite happy to stop playing.

Remember, too, that Capello is not entirely an objective observer. Under his aegis at Milan, Gullit twice in a season left the club for Sampdoria, the second time after an unhappy stay when he no longer seemed *persona grata* in the dressing room.

It has been alleged that for every "Gullit" shirt sold by the Chelsea club shop, 25 have been sold of Vialli's, a figure that the club shop dismisses. In any case, what would it matter?

It would surely be astounding if a player as proud and celebrated as Vialli did not feel badly about his exclusion from the team. He reacted bitterly to being dropped by the then manager, Arrigo Sacchi, from Italy's squad for the 1994 World Cup finals. When it seemed that they might be reconciled, Vialli learnt, to his fury, that Sacchi, never the most tactful of men, had carried out polls among his players. Many of them came from Milan and Vialli was given the thumbs-down.

When many came from his own club, Juventus, the answer was positive.

Stand-offs between famous players and a dominating manager are commonplace of football history, not least in Italy. "He's mad!" Roberto Baggio said after Sacchi pulled him off at the Giants Stadium during the World Cup game against Norway in 1994, after Pagliuca, the Italy goalkeeper, had been sent off. Despite the subsequent, vital World Cup goals he scored,

Baggio was never dear to Sacchi. He was publicly horrified this season when Sacchi returned as manager of Milan and then promptly dropped him from the team.

At least Chelsea have kept Vialli, even if, at the end of this season, he moves to pastures new, probably in Italy. Juventus, by contrast, jettisoned him last season, even though he had just captained the team that won the European Cup.

And what of the emotional Fabrizio Ravanelli, "the White Feather", scorer of Juve's goal in that European Cup final? Within weeks, he was summoned from his native Perugia to Turin and told that he was on his way. "Like a bolt from the blue," he cried, as he often does.

There, indeed, was humiliation for you — though, as an Italian critic remarked, Ravanelli had publicly told his coach, Marcello Lippi, to go to hell once too often.

What Chelsea have suffered from is simply an embarrassment of riches. The evening Gianfranco Zola arrived from

Parma and attended a press conference, Gullit was asked how he would accommodate Zola. Mark Hughes and Vialli in attack. He replied that he might play all three of them.

It did not work and when Vialli partnered Hughes, they duplicated rather than complemented one another. Once it grew clear that Hughes and Zola worked wonderfully together, Gullit was on the horns of a dilemma.

You might criticise him for asking his players which formation they preferred, hearing a response that they wanted two players up front — managers should make up their own minds — but there can be no doubt that this was the ideal solution.

Vialli can console himself that when he did leave Juventus, it was, thanks to the Bosman ruling, on a free transfer — and that, as the main man in Italy's players' union, he had extended that concession to domestic transfers. Meanwhile, you can understand his frustration. Even if this is scarcely the first case of its kind.

FOR Graham Allner, the Kidderminster Harriers manager and England semi-professional team assistant manager, the sight of Lee Hughes, his much-coveted striker, limping off after half an hour of England's match in Holland on Tuesday was the last thing he needed.

"Lee's ankle was swollen, but we still don't know how serious it is," Allner said after Hughes had received a kick when leading Holland a merry dance in a match that finished as a 0-0 draw.

Hughes had hit the bar and England had twice had goals disallowed for offside in a match for which they were denied Stevenage Borough and Woking players, who were involved in Vauxhall Conference matches.

"Ron Reid [the England manager] and I discussed it on the way home," Allner said. "We agreed the timing of the match was not ideal, but with England we have to be grateful for what we can get."

Allner has been too long in the game to rail against the injustices of possibly losing Hughes for the first leg of the Spalding Cup final against Macclesfield Town at Aggborough tomorrow and the Conference game against Woking on Monday.

Macclesfield, meanwhile, have reason to thank the distractions from Conference football that continue with a Staffordshire Cup semi-final against Hednesford Town on Tuesday and the Cheshire Senior Cup final against Hyde United tomorrow week, because the break will absorb suspensions for John Askey and Chris Byrne.

If the points dropped by Macclesfield and Stevenage have kept Kidderminster's Conference hopes alive, one of their erstwhile rivals from West Midlands League days, Tamworth, have put their ardenties behind them.

Tamworth made certain of the Dr Martens League midland division title by beating Stafford Rangers away last Saturday, having already cele-

Allner nurses English patient

NON-LEAGUE FOOTBALL BY WALTER GAMMIE

brated after a home win over Shepshed Dynamo that all but confirmed them as champions.

It was a case of third time lucky for Paul Hendrie, the manager, whose promotion dream exploded in a winner-takes-all match against Ilkeston Town two years ago that Tamworth lost 7-1 and last year ran aground when Tamworth's form dried up in the final weeks of the season.

The Scotsman, who scored the winning goal for Halifax Town against Manchester City in their memorable FA Cup upset of 1980, has repaid the faith of Bob Andrews, the club chairman, and also proved an inspiration to the supporters. His birthday recently inspired a "McHendrie day", when fans turned up in kilts and Russ Abbott wigs.

The club hopes to foster its long-term ambition of following Kidderminster into the Conference by building a 400-seat stand in the summer, financial assistance permitting.

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Vialli: humiliated

GOLF: YOUNG BRITON DIGS IN DETERMINED TO MAKE IMPRESSION ON THE MASTERS

Westwood survives fear of the unknown

FROM ROB HUGHES IN AUGUSTA

FIRST-FOOTING on the slick and capricious greens of Augusta was never any recipe for a honeymoon. Lee Westwood, the young professional from Woking, Surrey, was to have married last week, but put off the wedding to tackle the United States' most demanding golf course here in the company of Nick Faldo, Greg Norman, Arnold Palmer and the rest of the Masters. Yesterday, he held his nerve, held his game together and finished his first round on a five-over-par 77.

"I wasn't practising to shoot 77 on my honeymoon," he joked. "Some people say you can come off this course with a headache. In my case it was more from the glare of the sand. It is a bit overwhelming when you stand on the first tee and I admit I started badly. But really I enjoyed the experience. I'll be out at practice in another hour, because I am determined to make the cut."

When he stood on the 1st tee, shortly after 9am, there was a chill in the Augusta air, a thin crowd and not many eyes on the young Briton who, second only to the phenomenon Tiger Woods, is the rookie of this tournament. His playing partner, Dan Forsman, 14 years his senior and a relative veteran of 16 rounds over this unique course, drew the American applause, the handshakes, while Westwood — "he's from England" — had literally to step around those who did not recognise him.

He has a boyish, youthful face, but the shoulders and heavy torso of a rugby league player. And right from that 1st tee, his strength began to make the spectators gasp at the distance of his driver.

However, Augusta soon draws its own respect: you miss by inches and you get punished by yards. Westwood's first shot at Augusta National flew 257 yards from the tee, deviated a slight dog-leg to the right and dropped into the bunker on Teal Olive fairway. He looked undeterred and the sand here is so fine that extricating oneself from the traps, at least to these professionals, is no real impediment.

Nevertheless, Westwood was overawed, his nerves obvious in the way he rushed the 1st and 2nd holes. The strength was there, the accuracy less so and on greens so fast that he resembled green marbles, he double-bogeyed the 1st, bogeyed the 2nd.

For those close to him, his mother Trish and father John, this was a dream heading towards a nightmare. It was little consolation that Forsman, with all his experience, was to three-putt six of the first seven holes.

Back in England, unable to abandon a new business where she works as a beauty therapist, Westwood's fiancée, Laura Coltart, could not have known the circumstances. But she, born into a golfing family of her own, certainly appreciates that her man, a winner of tournaments in Europe, Japan and Malaysia, can stand the heat. Determination, solemn and solid, began to ebb through the nervousness from the 3rd hole, a 360-yard par-four. Westwood saved that par with a nerveless six-foot putt.

He was taking his Masters more slowly now, indeed beginning to incur suggestions from the green blazers to hurry up. From his square stance he began to demonstrate the sheer strength of his game. "It's different with a pencil in your hand and a scorecard in your back pocket," he observed, referring to the fact that his work down the fairways was less accurate than on two practice days.

Down the 7th fairway, for the first time, the two golfers came together and conversed. "Beauty," Forsman said as Westwood stole a shot back with a birdie at the 535-yard 8th, known as the Elephant's Graveyard. At the 10th, too, Westwood birdied the hole.

However, the Masters is never mastered. Westwood produced a wayward shot at the 13th, a foot off the fairway, a lost shot to par. On the 15th, he similarly had to clear the spectators and, with good grace, he apologised: "I am nervous enough as it is."

Then, with curious Americans at his elbow, he gave his

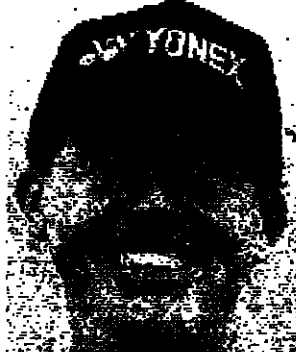


Westwood seeks to conquer first-round nerves on the 2nd tee at Augusta yesterday

second shot to the 15th an absolutely enormous degree of force and brought the ball safely down to the green. The audience, a gallery of maybe 150, now could appreciate that the spirit they call Churchillian survives.

He will be 24 on April 24, he intends by then to have played at least three rounds at Augusta — meaning that the likelihood that he must today improve against the course by five shots is well within his capability. "It did swell a little bit, but it never fooled me," he concluded of the testing Augusta wind. Then, Faldo-like, he gave himself barely an hour before joining the Masters in practice.

MASTERS LEADERBOARD	
United States unless stated	
74: D. Forsman, J. Skuman, D. Waldorf, D. Hart	
75: J. Leonard	
76: S. Cink, S. Torrance (GB)	
77: T. Aaron, J. Cook, L. Westwood (GB), S. McCann	
78: S. Hoch, L. Mizz, M. Bradley	
83: C. Coody, W. Casper	
84: G. Brewer	
85: D. Ford	
87: K. Green	
82: * J. Miller	
* denotes amateur	



Hoch: round of 79

RUGBY LEAGUE

Leeds pin hopes on Harris

BY CHRISTOPHER IRVINE

TESTYN HARRIS created an immediate impact when he came off the bench for Leeds Rhinos in a lost cause against Wigan a week ago. Leeds hope he makes a similar impression when he makes his full debut at home tonight against an unchanged St Helens, who he was going to join until a deal with Warrington turned sour and Leeds stepped in with a £350,000 offer.

Because he is starting Harris at stand-off half, Dean Bell, the Leeds coach, has preferred Ryan Sheridan to Graham Holroyd at scrum half in an effort to avoid a third successive Stones Super League defeat. "Like all good professionals, Testyn has tak-

en to things pretty easily," Bell said. "I was happy with the way he went with Ryan last week."

Nigel Wright, another young, outstanding stand-off half, is ready to begin his comeback for Wigan, after a 20-month lay-off in which he has undergone four ankle operations and managed only two appearances on the bench. He is in the squad for the visit tonight by Bradford Bulls and is hoping that a nightmare spell is finally behind him.

Bradford are angry that an appeal against a four-match ban imposed on Brian McDermott for striking three Leeds opponents in the Challenge Cup semi-final failed, despite

the forward's previously clean disciplinary record.

The Rugby Football League is looking at establishing a separate disciplinary panel for brawl charges to ensure consistency over sentencing. However, inconsistencies over the policing and punishment of high tackles is causing most concern. In the recent case of Paul Evans, of Paris Saint-Germain, who looked to be the victim of a mistaken refereeing decision, the disciplinary committee last night declared his sending off sufficient.

As well as St Helens and Bradford tonight, Salford are defending a 100 per cent record at home to Sheffield Eagles.

A not so untamed jungle

The Lost Gardens of Heligan Channel 4, 8.00pm

The penultimate instalment of the great Cornish garden restoration focuses on a 25-acre area known as the Jungle. A jungle implies something that has grown haphazardly but this one was created in the 1880s and stocked with exotic species brought back from foreign lands by Victorian plant-hunters. In contrast to the formality elsewhere, the Jungle offered a steep-sided valley with four ponds cascading one down to the other and the Cornish climate made it ideal for subtropical plants. But like the rest of Heligan, the Jungle was neglected for 70 years. The task of clearing thousands of unwanted trees, not to mention ivy and Japanese knotweed, is at the heart of tonight's film which maintains the standard of the series for handsome photography and lucid, enthusiastic explanation.

Gardeners' World BBC2, 8.30pm

When Geoff Hamilton died suddenly last year, many gardeners must have felt that their world had fallen in. Fortunately for the programme a more than capable deputy was at hand. Alan Titchmarsh was to have taken over in any case, allowing Hamilton to do more of his special series, but not in such sad circumstances. In a very different style, jocular rather than avuncular, Titchmarsh has proved the ideal anchor. His dispatches from his Hampshire garden combine entertainment and expertise in just the right doses and he is a good foil for the less exuberant members of the team. Tonight's items have Titchmarsh training wisteria, Gay Search witnessing the transformation of a concrete backyard in east London and Roy Lancaster concluding his reports on the glorious flora of South Africa.

The Grand ITV, 9.00pm

What until now had seemed like innocuous family viewing suddenly turns raunchy when Susan Hampshire's ageing prostitute thrashing one of her customers with a whip, her character is a puzzle, for apart from staying at the opulent hotel, she seems to have no connection with the



Eddie Izzard entertains (C4, 10.30pm)

story. Perhaps the writer, Russell T. Davies, feels the need for a bit of sado-masochism to pep up his narrative. This seems unlikely, as there is too much going on in other parts of the hotel. The nice Bananagrams (Michael Silberry and Julia St John) are still trying to keep the Grand out of the clutches of his nasty brother (Mark McGann) and there is a touching episode involving a young pregnant woman. Single mothers are demonised even today but Davies is making the point that in the 1920s they faced being deprived of the child and locked away in an asylum.

Eddie Izzard - Unrepentant Channel 4, 10.30pm

Although this show was recorded three years ago, and has been issued on video, it still offers a rare chance to catch what Izzard enjoys doing most — performing to a live audience with no breaks or time limit. And since he makes almost no use of topical references, the material has not dated. Izzard's act, delivered on a bare stage with no props, is an apparently rambling and unconnected series of observations and surreal spins. You think how much harder it must be to keep this up for an hour than to play from a conventional script. You also wonder how much one performance differs from another. But if Izzard's brand of humour appeals, and to a younger audience it does, it is enough to sit back and admire the verve, invention and sheer cheek. Peter Waymark

RADIO CHOICE

Kaleidoscope Future: The Rake's Progress Radio 4, 9.30pm

Of all the expert verdicts on Hogarth's eight-part tableaux delivered during Tim Marlow's Kaleidoscope feature tonight, the one I like best uses few words to convey a great deal. George Melly, dryly witty as always, says *The Rake's Progress* is like a tragedy presented with great relish by a reporter on the *First Sun* — but with genius. The other capsule judgments on the paintings and complementary engravings are passed by a trio of Hogarth devotees as they go from one "act" to the next at Sir John Soane's Museum in London. Perceptively, one of them says that Hogarth's stroke of genius was to make his doomed rake not just a target for satire but a conduit for satire itself.

RADIO 1

7.00am Mark Radcliffe 9.00 Simon Mayo 12.00 Jo Wiley 2.00am Mark Radcliffe 4.00 Kevin Campbell 6.15 Newsbeat 6.30am Pop Total 10.00am One in the Jungle with Dermot Day 12.00am Radio 1 Rap Show with Tim Westwood 3.00am Charlie Jordan

RADIO 2

6.00am Sarah Kennedy 8.05 Wake Up to Wogan 10.00 Ken Bruce 11.30am Jimmy Young 1.30 Debbie Dingle 3.00 Ed Stewart 5.05 John Dunn 7.00 Hubert Gregg 7.30am Friday Night is Music Night: From the Hippodrome, Golden Green, With the BBC Concert Orchestra under Ian Sutherland 9.30am Listen to the Band 10.00 Sheridan Morley 12.05am Patrick Lunt

RADIO 5 LIVE

5.00am Morning Reports 6.00 The Breakfast Programme 9.00 The Magazine 12.00 Midday with Mark 2.00pm Race on Five from Ascot: includes commentary on the 2.35, 3.10 and 3.45 races 4.00 John Inverdale Nationwide 7.00 News Extra 7.20am Friday Sport with John Murray. Rugby League: Super League, Wigan v Wakefield. The second day of the US Masters in Augusta 10.00 Brian Hayes's Election Night 12.00am After Hours 2.00am Up All Night

TALK RADIO

5.00am Chris Ashley and Sandy Warr 7.00 Paul Ross 9.00 Scott Chelholm 12.00am Lorraine Kelly 2.00pm Tommy Boyd 4.00 Drivetime, with Peter Dinkley 7.00am Moz Dee's Sportszone 10.00am Mike Allen 1.00am Ian Collins

RADIO 3

6.00am On Air, Includes Cherubini (Overture: Anacoreto), Ralf (Symphony No 3 in F, in the Forest), Shostakovich (Prelude and Fugue, Op 87 No 7), Schubert (Trio), Verdi (Aida, excerpts), Takemitsu (Waterways), Beethoven (String Quartet in F, Op 135) 9.00 Morning Collection, Presented by Penny Gore. Includes Eiger (Overture: Coda, in London), Beethoven (Piano Trio in G, Op 97), Mahler (Symphony No 2) 10.00 Musical Encounters, with Piers Burton-Page. Includes Schumann (Faschingsschwank aus Wien, Op 26), Handel (Theodora, 1992), Smetana (Piano Trio in G minor, Op 15), Weber (Piano Sonata No 3 in D minor, Op 49), Haydn (Symphony No 52 in C minor) 12.00 Composer of the Week: Rossini. Introduced by Rodric Durrell 1.00pm News, Bristol Lunchtime Concert. A concert given last month in St George's, Brandon Hill, Bristol. Introduced by Ceryle de Souza. Vanessa Lattar, piano. Includes Chopin (Impromptu in F sharp, Op 39), Fauré (Barcarolle in A flat, Op 44), Valse-Caprice in A, Op 30; Chopin (Nocturne in F, Op 15 No 1; Waltz in D flat, Op 64 No 1, Minuet), Fauré (Impromptu in E flat, Op 25; Nocturne in D flat, Op 63), Chopin Barcarolle in F sharp, Op 60 2.00 Performance. Michael Berkeley talks to the writer and philosopher Roger Scruton (1) 3.00 Mining the Archive. Leo Black concludes his celebration of the music of Johannes Brahms. Includes Brahms (Violin Sonatas), Wolf (From the Songs of Heine and Suleika), Pärt (Song Selection) (2/2)

RADIO 4

5.55am Shipping Forecast (LW) 6.00 News Briefing 6.10 Farming Today 6.25 Prayer for the Day 6.30 Today, Includes Sports News and Thought for the Day 8.50am Party Election Broadcast, by the Liberal Democrats 9.00 News 9.05 Election Call, Peter Stiles puts listeners' questions to the Conservative Michael Portillo. Call 0345-514614 (1) 10.00 News; Out of the Black Bag. The last in the three-part series looking at popular medicine. Claire Jenkins visits a group of inner-city GPs 10.30 Women's Hour, with Sylvia Hurler 11.30 The Natural History Programme, Presented by Joanna Pinnock 12.00 News; You and Yours. Consumer news and current affairs with Mark Whitaker 12.25pm Food Programme. Julia Elmer investigates the recent experiments by the big supermarket chains of delivering groceries to customers' homes 1.00 The World at One, with Nick Clarke 1.40 The Archers (1) 1.55 Shipping Forecast 2.00 Classic Serial: Beside the Ocean of Time, by George Mackay Brown. Dramatised by Stuart Bell. With Paul Moran, Billy Reddock, Michael Mackenzie and Tom Smith (1/2) (1) 3.00 News; The Afternoon Shift, with Laurie Taylor and the guests of the day 4.00 News 4.05 Kaleidoscope. Tim Marlow sees the realistic human sculptures by Duane Hanson. Plus an interview with Philip Dodd, the new director of the ICA in London 4.45 Short Story: The Rebel, by Madeleine Wickham. Read by Rebecca Tomlinson (1) 5.00 PM, with Charlie Lee-Potter and Chris Lowe 5.50 Shipping Forecast 6.55 Weather

6.00 Six O'Clock News 6.30 Growing Spaces. A new series of the gardening magazine with Ed Stark. Includes a poetic approach to the daffodil from Simon Anderson and Charles Simon reports on the progress being made at the National Botanic Garden of Wales, where he is director 7.00 News 7.05 The Archers 7.20 Pick of the Week. Chris Serle presents his selection of extracts from the last seven days on BBC radio and television 8.05 Any Questions? Jonathan Dimbleby chairs the topical debate from Stamford. With Charles Kennedy, Liberal Democrat spokesman on European Union affairs; Dr Marjorie Mowlem, Shadow Northern Ireland Secretary; Peter Lilley, Secretary of State for Social Security; the author and dramatist Fredrick Raphael 8.50 Lumière's Children. See Choice (1) 9.15 Letter from America. Another slice of Americana delivered by Alistair Cooke 9.30 Kaleidoscope Feature. See Choice (1) 10.00 The World Tonight, with Robin Lustig 10.45 Book at Bedtime, with John Rowe (5/10) (1) 11.00 Week Ending. The topical comedy sketch show with Sally Grace and the team 11.25 Tea Time. A satirical look at the week's events with Patrick Harman and guests 11.45 Twilight. In the last of the five-part series, Joanna Pinnock observes seabirds at dusk on the island of Skomer (1) 12.00 News 12.30 The Late Book: Never Marry a Median. The final part of Sandra Cini's story, read by Rita Moreno (3/3) (1) 12.45 Shipping Forecast 1.00am World Service

FREQUENCY GUIDE. RADIO 1. FM 97.6-99.8. RADIO 2. FM 88.0-90.2. RADIO 3. FM 90.2-92.4. RADIO 4. FM 92.4-94.8. LW 158. MW 720. RADIO 5 LIVE. MW 693, 906. WORLD SERVICE. MW 645, LW 158 (12.45-5.55am). CLASSIC FM. FM 100-102. VIRGIN RADIO. FM 105.8; MW 1197, 1215. TALK RADIO. MW 1058, 1088. Television and radio listings compiled by Peter Dear, Ian Hughes, Rosemary Smith, Susan Thomson, Jane Gregory and John McNamee.

WORD-WATCHING

Answers from page 42

VINET

(a) A running or trailing ornament or design in imitation of the branches, leaves, or tendrils of the vine, employed in architecture or decorative work. The diminutive of the Romance words for vine. Reappeared in the 18th century as *vignette*. Hall, *Chronicles of Henry VIII*, 1548: "Kyrtles of Crymseyne and purpal satyn, embroudered with a vnyet of Pomegranates of golde."

WUP

(b) To bind (something) round with cord, thread etc. To unite or join (thread, yarn etc). To secure or fasten by tying. Of obscure origin. Walker Scott, *Guy Mannering*, 1815: "A hank [of yarn], but not a ball one — the full yards o' three score and ten, but three broken, and thrice to oop [wup]."

VEJTURINO

(c) In Italy: one who let out carriages or horses on hire; also a driver of a vettura or four-wheeled carriage. Ultimately from the Latin *vehere* to convey. William Howard Russell, 1883: "Asserting my right of way notwithstanding the fierce opposition of many of the local vetturial, I toiled up the steep ascent for the hotel."

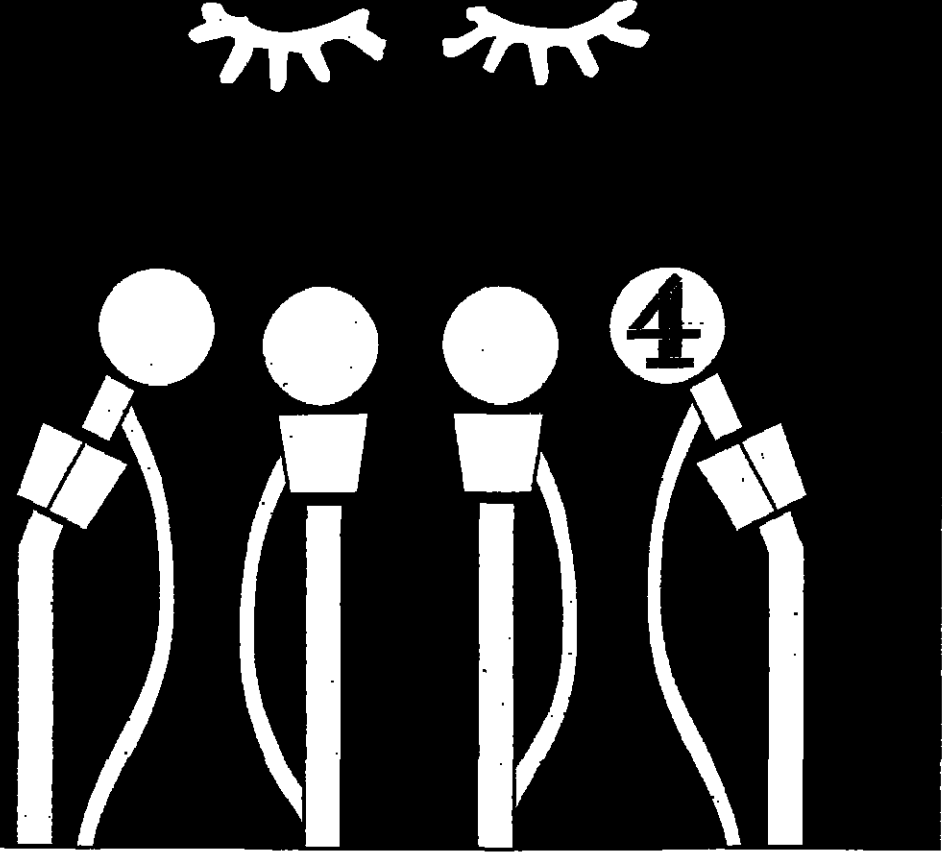
KYSTON

(d) A Macedonian heavy cavalry spear. From the Greek for the polished shaft of a spear, from *xyston* to scrape or polish. Grote, *Greece*, 1856: "The regiments of cavalry called *Sarissophori* or *Lancers* carrying a long lance, and distinguished from the heavier cavalry who carried the *xyston* or short pike."

SOLUTION TO WINNING CHESS MOVE

1... Qxd4+ 2 Qxd4 Nf3 checkmate

Eddie Izzard:
Tonight 10.30



Not quite herself, but then, she never was

Mrs Merton has a problem, a subtle variation on the old saw about not being the woman she was. Mrs M's unique difficulty is that she has never been the woman she was. It took a little while but now you know that only her doing studio audience scenes in the fact that inside the floral print and support hose of the hostess turns the young and vigorous Caroline Aherne. No wonder she took them with her to make Mrs Merton in Las Vegas (BBC1).

The reason for going to America, I presume, was fresh blood. To find a celebrity, any celebrity, who by sheer dint of under-research would walk straight into the trap that Mrs Merton has set and spring so exquisitely in the early days of her career. What was needed was enough innocence to put the "back in 'in-joke'". We didn't get it. First up was Patrick Duffy.

which was bad for two reasons. First because he was on the *Clive James Show* last Sunday and second because he is cute. Cute not just in the easy-on-the-eye, Bobby Ewing sense, but cute in the sense that he knew exactly what was going on. His publicist had done his job. Ewing was as in on the joke as every other guest in the series.

The fact that he was self-deprecating, sharp and witty didn't help. Here was an American that could make jokes about Anne Diamond, an American who when asked "what was the Queen like?" replied "short". Mrs M is not at her best with guests who are funnier than her. "Any one got any questions for old Bobby?" she asked, the strain beginning to show.

As ever, her interviews contained the one carefully prepared question that was intended to be either rude or parochial. With

Duffy, she opted for the former: "In Dallas you were the simple, gormless brother — was that acting?" Even for Duffy, this was clearly going a bit far. "Are your socks wrinkled — or aren't you wearing any?"

With her other guest, Tony Curtis, she went for parochial and lived to regret it. If the exchange about Richard and Judy had been rehearsed, Curtis had clearly forgotten his lines. She had three stabs at it, before giving up and changing tack: "You're 71 and your girlfriend is 27 — is everything working down below?" Curtis assured her it was and slipped her a couple of hotel keys: "Bring a friend." Upstaged again.

I don't know if Sir David Frost has known the Merton sofa yet, but probably too busy filling his own on Sunday mornings. I expect. But when they do get together they should discover they

REVIEW



Matthew Bond

have much in common. For, as my colleague Nicholas Wapshott rightly pointed out in Monday's paper, Frost is not the man he was — particularly when it comes to conducting the political interviews. But nor is he entirely a spent force in television, as 1964 And All That (Channel 4) showed. It was rather fun.

The idea was to look for the similarities between the 1964 gen-

eral election and our own. Sounds rather tedious, but put Frost at that. Was the Week That Was and let nobody speak for longer than 45 seconds and you have something really quite watchable.

Frost's starting point were the similarities between now and then — the young, charismatic Labour leader fighting his first election, a Tory Government recovering from scandal to close the gap in the polls, etcetera. Unfortunately, his studio panel disagreed. Tony Blair was more Gaitskell than Wilson, in the opinion of Shirley Williams, while Peter Shore pointed out that while Wilson's manifesto was avowedly socialist, Blair's... was not.

Just when Frost's argument looked lost before it had started, our own Anthony Howard popped up. He reminded us that in both cases the incumbent Tory Government had been in office for an

awfully long time. Frost looked suitably grateful.

Whenever proceedings threatened to drag, we cut away from the 1960s pop-art set, either for another burst of black and white footage of the period (complete with mock newsreel commentary) or to the inevitable irony of one of Steve Punt's monologues. Nobody sang, which I thought was a shame. Had it all been live and minutes shorter (preferably without the 15 minutes that showed just how untelegraphic the debate about Europe is) Frost could have been seriously back in business.

Whether Mrs Merton is not the woman she was and Frost not the inquisitor he was, Animal Hospital (BBC2), without doubt, is not the programme it was. It is weeks into its run now and I still haven't squeezed out a single tear. Last night, I didn't come close. Even

when the vet went to a point-to-point and there was the prospect of some "difficult decisions" having to be made, all he got for the horses got were a graze and a sprained ligament.

Back in the surgery, Rolf Harris continued to concentrate on animals that had something potentially funny wrong with them, such as the Aylesbury duck (treated in an Aylesbury surgery, he-ho) being injected with anabolic steroids because she had grown too heavy for her legs. "How long have you had her?" asked Rolf. Since she was an egg, naturally.

Audrey the duck may have been rescued from the dinner table, but Rambo, the six-day-old lamb, still had his work cut out. A splint had straightened his knees, as Harris put it: "a surprisingly simple treatment, which will cure potentially a big problem". Such as not being able to run away from the mint sauce.

- 6.00am Business Breakfast** (33985)
7.00am BBC Breakfast News (70704256)
9.05am Election Call Defense Secretary Michael Portillo answers viewers' questions (9403527)
10.00am Style Challenge (46140)
10.30am Can't Cook, Won't Cook (80633)
11.00am News (T) and weather (4683091)
11.05am The Really Useful Show (9126782)
11.35am Change That (6557256)
12.00am News (T) regional news and weather (4367458)
12.05pm Call My Bluff (5919188)
12.35pm Good Living (9740458)
1.00am News (T) and weather (90459)
1.30am Regional News and weather (50370343)
1.45am The Weather Show (3981850)
1.50am Neighbours (T) (22705888)
2.15am Quincy The coroner believes that a murderer has assumed the identity of his newsreader victim (T) (3803411)
3.00am Through the Keyhole (1411)
3.55am Bodger and Badger Simon and Badger cause chaos (T) (155465). 4.10 Ace Ventura: Pet Detective (8154569). 4.35 Clarissa Explains It All (T) (T) (7477458)
5.00am Newsround (T) (5128508). 5.10 Blue Peter (T) (5838139)
5.35am Neighbours (T) (T) (537168)
6.00am News (T) and weather (850)
6.30am Regional News Magazine (430)
7.00am Big Break Stephen Hendry joins rising stars Mark Johnston-Alan and Gerard Greene. With Jim Davidson (T) (3492)
7.30am Top of the Pops The latest hits, including new videos, pre-chart sounds and live performances (T) (614)
8.00am Porridge Young love preys on the fears of an overprotective father. Classic comedy with Ronnie Barker and Richard Beckinsale (T) (2140)
8.30am A Question of Sport David Coleman asks the questions in the sports quiz. Ally McColist and John Parrott lead the teams (T) (1275)
9.00am News (T) regional news and weather (307614)
9.55am Party Election Broadcast by the Liberal Democrats (T) (333492)
10.00am Silent Witness (2/2) Frustration dogs Sam as she becomes increasingly convinced that the wrong suspect is being hunted by the police. Last in the series (T) (730614)
10.50am Golf: US Masters Live coverage continued from BBC2 (796169)
11.50am Mobsters (1991) With Christian Slater, Patrick Dempsey, Richard Grieco and Anthony Quinn. Violent drama charting the early years of gangsters Bugsy Siegel and Lucky Luciano, as they and their friends make a daring bid to overthrow the dons of 1920s New York. Directed by Michael Karbelnikoff (30142614)
1.25am Money Mania (1987) with Royce D. Applegate and Pam Matheon. A man's dying words spark a wild goose chase across Arizona in search of hidden loot. Directed by Richard Fleischer (1588893)
2.55am Weather (9503378)

Video Plus+ and the Video PlusCodes
 The numbers next to each TV programme listing are Video PlusCode numbers, which allow you to pre-programme your video recorder with a VideoPlus+ handset. Tap in the Video PlusCode for the programme you wish to record. VideoPlus+ is a trademark of Gemstar Development Ltd.

- 6.00am O.U.: Working Mothers** (2397169)
 6.25 Immigration, Refugees and Ethnicity (5850904). 7.15 See Hear Breakfast News (T) (8184782). 7.30 Teenage Mutant Hero Turtles (T) (4275237). 7.55 Fifty Fifty (T) (5760411). 8.20 Secret Life of Toys (T) (3252430). 8.35 The Raccoons (T) (9865169). 9.00 Cartoon (2048275). 9.10 The Phil Spector Show (b/w) (314165). 9.35 The Munsters (b/w) (8647506). 10.00 Teletubbies (44782)
10.30 The Quiet American (1957) American Audie Murphy arrives in Indo-China full of naive ideas for ending the war. Also with Michael Redgrave. Directed by Joseph L. Mankiewicz (T) (40258)
12.30pm Working Lunch (92099). 1.00 Secret Life of Toys (T) (22247168). 1.15 Business (2252504)
1.20am Dark Victory (1939) b/w Classic melodrama, with Bette Davis, George Brent, Humphrey Bogart, Geraldine Fitzgerald and Ronald Reagan. Directed by Edmund Goulding (77431695)
3.00am News (T) (7654256). 3.05 The Natural World. The Outer Hebrides (T) (T) (9884091). 3.55 News (T) 4.00 Blackbustards (9762817). 4.25 Ready, Steady, Cook (8789904)
4.55am Esther Bringing the House Down: DIY (9851237)
5.30am Swimming: The British European Trials. Sharon Davies presents highlights (879)
6.00am The Simpsons Bart and Homer are pursued by angry locals (T) (31985)
6.30am Star Trek: A shuttle carrying Kirk, Spock and an ill Federation Commissioner is trapped on a planet by a mysterious force (T) (T) (369492)
7.10am Pole to Pole Last in series (T) (T) (303256)
8.00am A Gaffer's Travels with Peter Alliss The first American in space, Admiral Alan Shepard, former Vice-President Dan Quayle and Gene Hackman. (T) (1922)
8.30am Gardeners' World Presented by Alan Titchmarsh (T) (9817)



Gregor Fisher and friends (9.00pm)

- 9.00am Rab C Nesbitt** Rab (Gregor Fisher) tries to rekindle the spark in his ailing marriage (T) (T) (5458)
9.30am Golf: US Masters Live coverage from Augusta (25362)
10.30am Election Broadcast: Liberal Democrats (T) (888324)
11.35am Newsnight (T) (366188)
11.50am Space: Above and Beyond (725237)
12.15am This Life (T) (T) (6923638)
1.00am King of Hearts (1965) Cult comic drama with Alan Bates, Genevieve Buyl and Jean-Claude Braly. An army private is sent to prevent an evacuated town from being destroyed, in English, French and German with English subtitles (778015)
2.35am Weather (5703116)

- 6.00am GMTV** (6881904)
9.25am Chain Letters (3520527)
9.55am Regional News (T) (2642614)
10.00am The Time, the Place (84808)
10.30am This Morning (T) (61002275)
12.20pm Regional News (T) (4356343)
12.30am News (T) and weather (9732556)
12.55am Our House (9744275)
1.25am Home and Away (T) (64106850)
1.50am Murder, She Wrote (T) (2371985)
2.50am Garden Calendar (T) (5919546)
3.20am News (T) (7661546)
3.25am Regional News (T) (7680817)
3.30am Rosie and Jim (6107527). 3.40 Slim Pick (9758782). 3.50 Cartoon Time (9754986). 4.00 Zzzap! (5239140). 4.15 Jumanji (T) (8139898). 4.40 Crazy Country (282888)
5.10am A Country Practice (1593527)
5.40am News (T) and weather (974072)
6.00am Home and Away (T) (547072)
6.25am HTV Weather (429053)
6.30am HTV News (T) (433430)
6.55am Party Election Broadcast by the Liberal Democrats (T) (401091)
7.00am Lucky Numbers Game show hosted by Shane Richie (T) (8188)
7.30am Coronation Street The police have news for Mike. Audrey finds herself in a tight corner (T) (782)
8.00am The Bill When a suburban housewife is found strangled, suspicion falls on the homeless schizophrenic she had befriended. But Meadows' investigation takes an unexpected turn (T) (4506)
8.30am You've Been Framed with Jeremy Beadle (T) (6343)



Mark McGann makes changes (9.00)

- 9.00am The Grand** Mark McGann makes his presence felt when he demands a few changes be implemented. With Mark McGann, Michael Sibery and Susan Hampshire (T) (9827)
10.00am News (T) and weather (87782)
10.30am HTV News and weather (518817)
10.40am Fly-on-the-wall documentary. The staff recover from a crisis in the kitchens and await the appointment of a new head chef (T) (145782)
11.15am At the Albert (828614)
12.15am Box Office America (T) (3450541)
12.25am The Killer Inside Me (1976) With Stacy Keach, Susan Tymel and Keenen Wynn. A small town sheriff hides a dark secret. Directed by Burr Kirkwood (748102)
2.20am Club Nation (T) (5181034)
3.20am Funky Bunk (9508831)
4.20am Sound Bites (9474136)
4.30am Collins and Maconie's Movie Club (T) (37270)
5.00am Coronation Street (T) (15560)
5.30am News (77183)

- As HTV West except:**
12.55pm-1.25am A Country Practice (9744275)
1.50am Savannah (2371985)
2.50-3.20am Our House (5919546)
5.10-5.40am Shortland Street (1593527)
6.25-6.55am Central News (555091)
10.40am Central Weekend Election '97 (4217492)
12.10am Weekly World News (1165134)
12.40am Funky Bunker (7957183)
1.40am Baywatch (8441473)
2.35am Cyber Cafe (826251)
3.00am Movie Club (38541)
3.30am Dating the Enemy (38251)
As HTV West except:
12.55pm-1.25am A Country Practice (9744275)
1.55am Savannah (2389904)
2.50-3.20am Liza's Country (5919546)
5.10-5.40am Shortland Street (1593527)
6.25-6.55am Anglia News (555091)
10.40am Cross Question Election '97 (333850)
11.40am Pushing the Limits: The Making of Eraser (757986)
12.05am Short Story Cinema (7351803)

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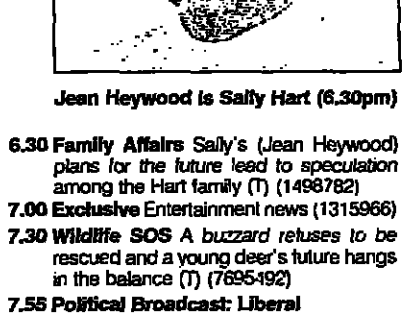
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- 6.00am 5 News Early** (7813324)
7.30am Haverkazeo (2933782)
8.00am Adventures of the Bush Patrol (2551411)
8.30am WideWorld: State of the Union The relationship between American presidents and the media (2550782)
9.00am Espresso (5550533)
10.00am Exclusion (T) (6868782). 10.30 Nancy L (T) (2570546). 11.00 Lezza (9790430). 11.50 Double Espresso (45364275)
12.00am The Bold and the Beautiful (T) (2561898)
12.30am Family Affairs (T) (9445614)
1.00am 5 News Update (92468850)
1.05am Sunset Beach (T) (5560324)
2.00am 5's Company (4427409)
3.30am His Kind of Woman (1951) b/w with Robert Mitchum, Jane Russell and Vincent Price. A gambler is given a sum of money to visit a resort in Mexico, where, unbeknown to him, a notorious mobster plans to kill him and steal his identity. Directed by John Farrow (7817140)
5.30am 100 Per Cent (147871)
6.00am Whittie (T) (1407430)



Jean Heywood is Sally Hart (6.30pm)

- 6.30am Family Affairs** Sally's (Jean Heywood) plans for the future lead to speculation among the Hart family (T) (1498782)
7.00am Exclusive Entertainment news (1315966)
7.30am Wildlife SOS A buzzard refuses to be rescued and a young deer's future hangs in the balance (T) (7695492)
7.55am Political Broadcast: Liberal Democrats (5973527)
8.00am Attractions A What's On guide to the weekend (1324814)
8.30am 5 News (1303121)
9.00am Trapped and Rescued (1984) with Jennie Garth, Jill Eisenberg and Tom Irwin. Drama about a troublesome teenage girl. Directed by Robert Iscove (3203563)
10.50am Exclusive Extra (5215850)
11.00am The Jack Docherty Show (2094445)
11.40am Club Class (2612188)
12.10am News and Sport (2907185)
12.15am Buried Alive (1988) with Robert Vaughn, Karen Witter and Donald Pleasence. Edgar Allan Poe's chilling tale about a teacher's quest to discover why a number of pupils have disappeared (6678270)
2.00am The Virgin and the Gypsy (1970) with John Salkins and Franco Nero. A steamy adaptation of D.H. Lawrence's novel about a young woman causing a stir in 1920s England. Directed by Christopher Mills (5808638)
3.45am Throb (81625201)
4.10am Night Stand (33774980)
4.40am Prisoner: Cell Block H (5637569)
5.30am 100 Per Cent (T) (5508270)

For more comprehensive listings of satellite and cable channels, see the Directory, published on Saturday

- SKY 1**
6.00am Morning Glory (612091) 9.00am Regis and Kether Lee (26579) 10.00am Another World (25189) 11.00am Days of Our Lives (38523) 12.00am The Oprah Winfrey Show (28206) 1.00am The New Generation (25073) 2.00am Jeany Raphael (9769) 3.00am Jerry Jones (34256) 4.00am Oprah with the Stars (35327) 5.00am The New Generation (25073) 6.00am Star Trek (T) (3492) 7.00am Star Trek: Voyager (T) (3492) 8.00am Star Trek: Voyager (T) (3492) 9.00am Star Trek: Voyager (T) (3492) 10.00am Star Trek: Voyager (T) (3492) 11.00am Star Trek: Voyager (T) (3492) 12.00am Star Trek: Voyager (T) (3492)
SKY 2
7.00pm Xena: Warrior Princess (1751850) 8.00am Marmaduke (1777898) 9.00am Pacific Drive (1778282) 10.00am Tales from the Crypt (664545) 11.00am Late Show (627343) 12.00am Late Show (627343)
SKY NEWS
 Worldwide news coverage, with bulletins on the hour, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
SKY MOVIES
6.00am Running Free (1894) (21533) 7.30am The Muppet Movie (1989) (222224) 8.00am The Muppet Movie (1989) (222224) 9.00am The Muppet Movie (1989) (222224) 10.00am The Muppet Movie (1989) (222224) 11.00am The Muppet Movie (1989) (222224) 12.00am The Muppet Movie (1989) (222224)
SKY SPORTS 1
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THE MOVIE CHANNEL
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- SKY 3**
6.00am Morning Glory (612091) 9.00am Regis and Kether Lee (26579) 10.00am Another World (25189) 11.00am Days of Our Lives (38523) 12.00am The Oprah Winfrey Show (28206) 1.00am The New Generation (25073) 2.00am Jeany Raphael (9769) 3.00am Jerry Jones (34256) 4.00am Oprah with the Stars (35327) 5.00am The New Generation (25073) 6.00am Star Trek (T) (3492) 7.00am Star Trek: Voyager (T) (3492) 8.00am Star Trek: Voyager (T) (3492) 9.00am Star Trek: Voyager (T) (3492) 10.00am Star Trek: Voyager (T) (3492) 11.00am Star Trek: Voyager (T) (3492) 12.00am Star Trek: Voyager (T) (3492)
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SAILING 40

Lucy Duncan bids relieved farewell to Southern Ocean

SPORT

FRIDAY APRIL 11 1997

MOTOR RACING 43

Frentzen coming to terms with life under the spotlight



Anger at Old Trafford as Premier League turns down request for extension to season

United's plea for extra time rejected

By RICHARD HOBSON

MANCHESTER United suffered their second disappointment within 24 hours yesterday when the FA Premier League dismissed a request to ease their fixture congestion by extending the football season. Martin Edwards, the United chief executive, is planning an appeal to the Football Association and has threatened to turn to the courts in a bid to reverse the decision.

In a furious response that would have impressed Alex Ferguson, the United manager, for its withering contempt of officialdom, Edwards accused Premier League officials of being "amateurish".

"People criticise and say that it is just Manchester United moaning and whining, but there are particu-

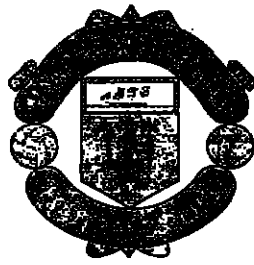
lar circumstances for us making this request," Edwards said.

United face four fixtures in eight days at the end of the season: against Leicester City on May 3, Middlesbrough on May 6, Newcastle United on May 8 and West Ham United on May 11. A decision that they should honour that schedule was made by a two-man panel comprising Peter Leaver, QC, the Premier League chief executive, and Sir John Quinton, the chairman.

"The Premier League has considered the needs of all clubs and taken full account of the issues at stake in the final weekend of the season," a statement said. "It is possible, at this stage, that every game on May 11 will have an impact on either the championship, European places or relegation."

Edwards said that the problem has arisen because of Middlesbrough's continued involvement in both domestic cup competitions. Twice, he said, the fixture had been arranged and then rearranged because Middlesbrough's FA Cup and Coca-Cola Cup ties took precedence over the FA Carling Premiership. The situation had been exacerbated by the postponement of two rounds of weekend matches, after the original schedule was produced, to accommodate international matches.

"We have tried very hard to sort the situation out because we were aware of the fixtures piling up," Edwards said. "To expect us to play these four games in eight days is quite ludicrous. We have to win this matter either by an appeal to the FA or maybe a judicial review."



Mark Hodgkinson Page 45
Final frontier Page 44

They say this is the best league in the world, but this is amateurish. It is crazy and shows how badly it is being run."

Bryan Robson, the Middlesbrough manager, has sided with Ferguson in support of his former

club. Middlesbrough also face four games in the same eight-day period. Otherwise, while there may be a modicum of sympathy for United's predicament — and widespread hope that they can reverse the 1-0 defeat against Borussia Dortmund sustained on Wednesday night and reach the European Cup final — there is little support for Edwards from within the game.

Because of their involvement in the Champions' League, United were given a bye into the third round of the Coca-Cola Cup, sparing them two games, and, despite their schedule, they have agreed to face Celtic in a testimonial match in aid of Brian McClair on April 15.

Arsène Wenger, the Arsenal manager, incurred the wrath of Ferguson last Saturday when he publicly opposed United's call. "I

have nothing against Manchester United, but I want regularity in the competition. It is difficult to change the rules so near to the end of the season," Wenger said yesterday, suggesting that Ferguson should have anticipated the situation earlier. Arsenal, who are third in the FA Carling Premiership, have seven clear days in which to prepare for their final match, against Derby County.

Wenger may be unaware that Arsenal endured 70 games in the 1979-80 season, when they reached the finals of the FA Cup and Cup Winners' Cup. Nobody doubts that the pace of the game has quickened since then, although the choking calendar was given more room to breathe two years ago, when the Premiership was cut from 22 to 20 clubs. Uefa, the governing body of

European football, would like a further reduction to 18. Any such move is likely to meet with opposition from the club chairmen, who would not want to lose revenue from two more home games.

More likely are alterations to the format of the Coca-Cola Cup, with negotiations already under way between the Premier League and the Football League. One idea is to replicate the competition in Scotland, which is completed early in the season. Alternatively, those clubs involved in European competition may be allowed to pull out.

The Premier League said yesterday that it would meet with FA and Football League officials to discuss the idea of producing a skeleton fixture list for the next three seasons, incorporating all competitions, to allow for proper planning.

Augusta greens terrifyingly fast

Early starters staggered by putting perils

FROM JOHN HOPKINS, GOLF CORRESPONDENT, IN AUGUSTA

GEORGIA'S famous Southern hospitality and warmth of welcome did not last for long as the 61st Masters got underway yesterday. A brilliant blue sky and warm sunshine were accompanied by a biting wind that gusted through the pines.

It was soon obvious that the greens were so firm and fast they were presenting a challenge that was too severe for almost all of the early starters. Dan Forsman three-putted six of the first seven greens, for example.

Sam Torrance reeled off after a 75 with a wry grin. He was three over par — but par on a day such as this was nearer 74 than 72 because of the difficulties posed by the greens. "I played lovely," Torrance said. "I am really swinging the club well." John Cook had a 77 and when he finished he said: "By the time we got to the first green, it was blue."

Scott Hoch's score of 79 was bad, but he was eight strokes

MASTERS 97

Rob Hughes 46
Leading scores 46

better than Ken Green, who was back at Augusta National for the first time since 1991. "I had 43 strokes and 44 putts," Green said. "I five-putted the 16th."

Since Green's 87, 15 over par, resembled the first digits of a hefty telephone bill, it was appropriate that he should have stormed away from the 18th green saying: "I'm not talking. Here's my phone number. Call me later if you

want anything." Green's score was his worst by eight strokes at Augusta.

The course showed no favours to Lee Westwood and Jesper Parnevik, two Europeans making their first appearances here.

Westwood, a Ryder Cup candidate, who had birdied the opening hole in two of his three practice rounds, ran up a six while Parnevik, third in the US money list, watched in horror as his second stroke to the first hole sucked back from the putting surface as the backspin took hold.

He was so shaken by this and so uncertain of the speed of the greens that his first putt ended little more than halfway to the hole, 25 feet from the flag.

This was as nothing, though, compared to Hoch's experiences on the 9th, a green that tilts noticeably from back to front as Greg Norman found to his cost in the fourth round last year. Then Norman's second was within one yard of ending on the right part of the green, only to spin back and run helter skelter down the fairway.

The same thing happened to Hoch's ball. It slid off the putting surface and bounced this way and that as it rolled down the evil slope that leads up the green.

The difference was that Norman was playing an approach stroke. Hoch was putting. He was 20 feet away in two, 150 feet away in three.

"Were the greens unfair?" Torrance was asked. "Which side of unfair do you want?" he replied. "I'd say they were unfair. They were very fair if you hit into the right spot but unfair if you did not. I would like to see a little more



Torrance, who got round in a creditable 75, three over par, in difficult conditions, demonstrates his bunker expertise at the opening hole

leniency. You should be able to shoot 68 and be happy, not a 75 and be happy."

Torrance faced one moment of potential disaster when he was above the hole on the 6th green. He had hit a magnificent five-iron straight at the flag and then was left with a six-foot downhill putt.

He liked the distance, hated his position, knowing that if it did not go into the hole it could conceivably end 30 feet below it. "I barely breathed on it," he said. "Thank God it went in."

Only one man was under par at midday and after the first 100 minutes of play there had been only three birdies.

In part, this was a reflection of the difficulty of the course, in part a criticism of the sham of a draw, which resulted in

almost every big name in world golf teeing off after 12.00.

Steve Jones, the US Open champion, Steve Elkington, winner of the Players Championship, Ben Crenshaw, the champion in 1995, Jack Nicklaus, Arnold Palmer, as well as Nick Faldo, the defending champion, Tiger Woods, the game's hottest property, José María Olazábal, Tom Lehman, the player of the year in the United States in 1996 and Nick Price were all among those starting their rounds in a little too much obscurity to the great golf television.

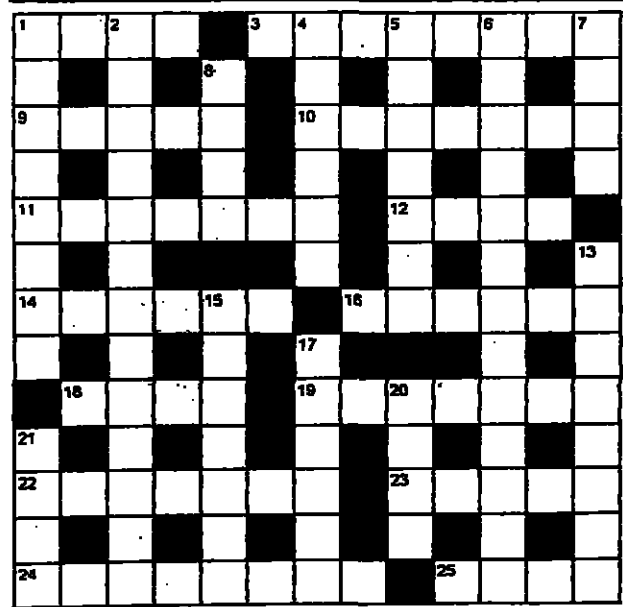
Colin Montgomerie was one of the few leading players who began his round before midday. Wielding a putter with

less loft than he would use in Europe, Montgomerie ran into trouble as early as the 2nd, where his drive flew away to the right and ended resting against a pine cone beneath a dogwood tree.

"Better not move it, Al," he joked to Alastair McLean, his caddy. "There are too many people watching." He then wasted a good recovery shot by three-putting from 20 feet. However, he birdied the 3rd.

By 2.25 local time, 48 competitors had reached the turn and only two were under par. Stuart Appleby, the promising young Australian, who is competing in his first Masters, was the first. Later, Corey Pavin, the 1995 US Open champion, became the second. They were both out in 35.

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD



No 1065

ACROSS

- 1 Greedy; very keen (4)
- 3 Lustrous (8)
- 9 Desert plants (5)
- 10 Fishing vessel (7)
- 11 Current-measuring device (7)
- 12 Implement (4)
- 14 Unintelligent (6)
- 16 Seductive appeal (8)
- 18 Heel over; set of items (4)
- 19 Not listened to (7)
- 22 As 8 is of 18 (7)
- 23 Caribbean vodoo island (5)
- 24 Twilight (Scott) (8)
- 25 Complicated (4)

DOWN

- 1 Word not in current use (8)
- 2 (Held) in solitary (13)
- 4 Blood-circulating tube (6)
- 5 Personal possession (7)
- 6 Word in informal use (13)
- 7 Traditional wisdom (4)
- 8 River sediment (4)
- 13 Selling (small items, drugs) (8)
- 15 Meantime (7)
- 17 Armed criminal (6)
- 20 Sunken boundary (2-2)
- 21 Group of workmen, criminals (4)

The solution to 1064 will be published Wednesday, April 16

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Plans for Scottish premier division voted out by league

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

SCOTLAND'S leading clubs yesterday drove the final nail into proposals for a 16-team premier division next season. The Scottish League management committee scrapped plans to put a 16-12-12 divisional blueprint to a vote of all clubs at the end of the present campaign.

Instead, Scottish football must wait and wonder what the future holds after a meeting in Edinburgh yesterday by chairmen of the top ten clubs. That ensured that the 16-12-12 plan, originally put forward by Jack Steedman, of Clydebank, was doomed and yesterday's meeting rubber-stamped that the matter will not even be raised at the league's annual meeting on May 31.

David Murray, the Rangers chairman, and Fergus McCann, his Celtic counterpart, are at the heart of the plans for a tartan premiership, styled

on the successful English example. The top clubs want more control over negotiations with sponsors and television companies, with the possibility of pay-per-view television in the future adding another element. Present contracts with Scottish League sponsors' Bell's and television deals expire at the end of next season, with re-negotiation now dependent on the way ahead.

Heart of Midlothian were once again rebuffed in their attempt to play Rangers at Murrayfield instead of Tynecastle on Sunday, May 11. The Edinburgh club wanted to switch because of redevelopment work at Tynecastle, which, they say, will leave them without a police observation box. However, the League will not allow a switch of the fixture, saying all last-day games must be played on the same afternoon. Hearts have

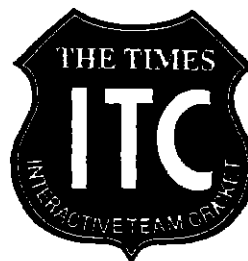
now been told to instal a temporary police box or come up with another venue.

Ian Wright and Peter Schmeichel yesterday drew a line under their controversial public clashes by assuring the Football Association that there was no feud between them. Nevertheless, Graham Kelly, the FA chief executive, has warned them both that a similar conflict in future would be met by a heavy penalty.

Wright, the Arsenal striker, and Schmeichel, the Manchester United goalkeeper, have angrily clashed twice this season.

Schmeichel was alleged to have made racist remarks to Wright during United's 1-0 FA Carling Premiership win at Old Trafford in November after the first of the incidents. The controversy surfaced again after an incident in United's win on February 19.

ON MONDAY



The Times launches the great summer of cricket and the Interactive Team Cricket game with Cricket 97, a 16-page guide to the season.

● Play Interactive Team Cricket and win a £10,000 first prize plus Test match tickets.

● Alan Lee tours the counties and assesses their prospects.

● Full fixtures guide to the first-class and one-day matches.

● Will Hollis be the name on the lips of England's selectors?

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HONG KONG	35p	59p	40%
INDIA	59p	51-02	42%
PAKISTAN	76p	51-13	33%
GERMANY	19p	24p	21%
SWEDEN	18p	24p	26%
NETHERLANDS	20p	24p	17%
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